



ON



TO

Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library

BV4501 .M114

McAlpin, Edwin A

MAIN

On to Christ : the gospel of the new era



3 9967 00218 3700

EDV

ST

IN JR.

ACCESSION NUMBER

47342

SHELF NUMBER

BV
4501
M114

The Virginia Library

McCormick

Theological Seminary

of the

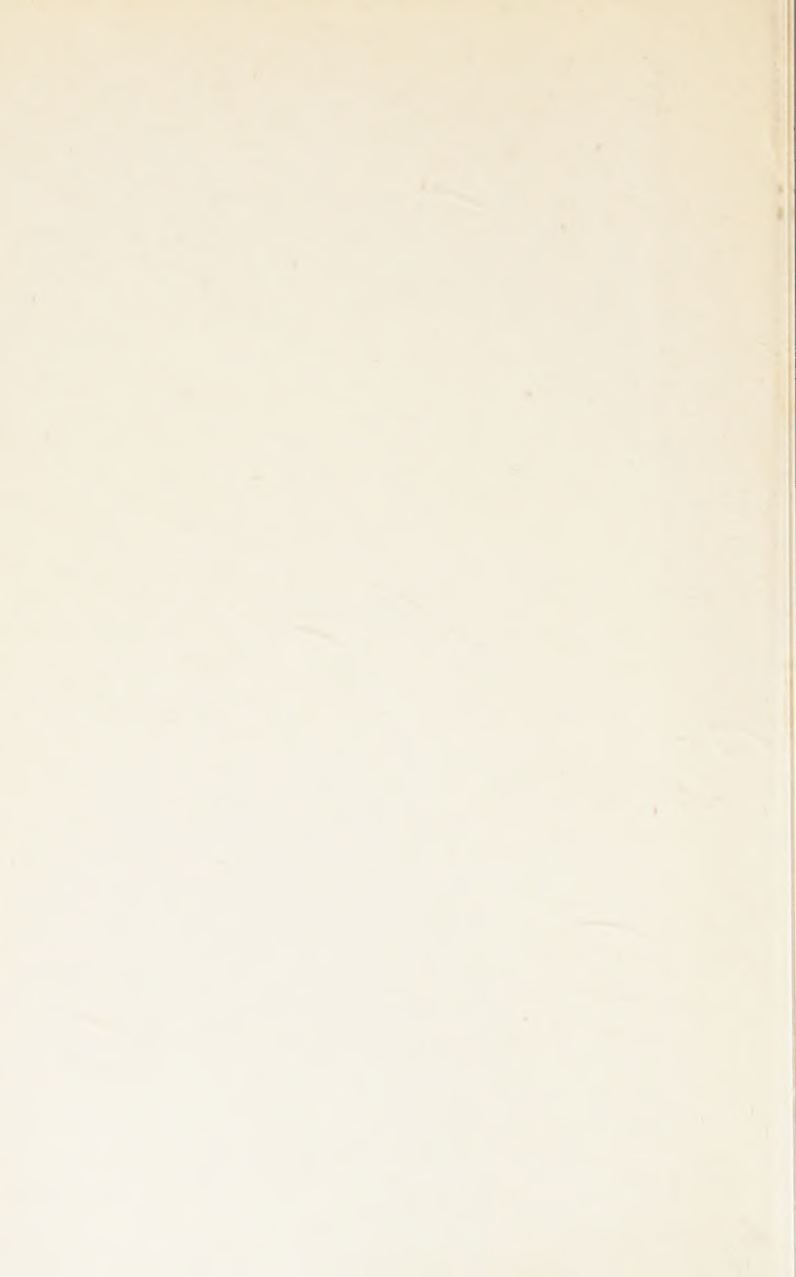
Presbyterian Church, Chicago

826 Belden Avenue

From _____

Received Nov. 1919

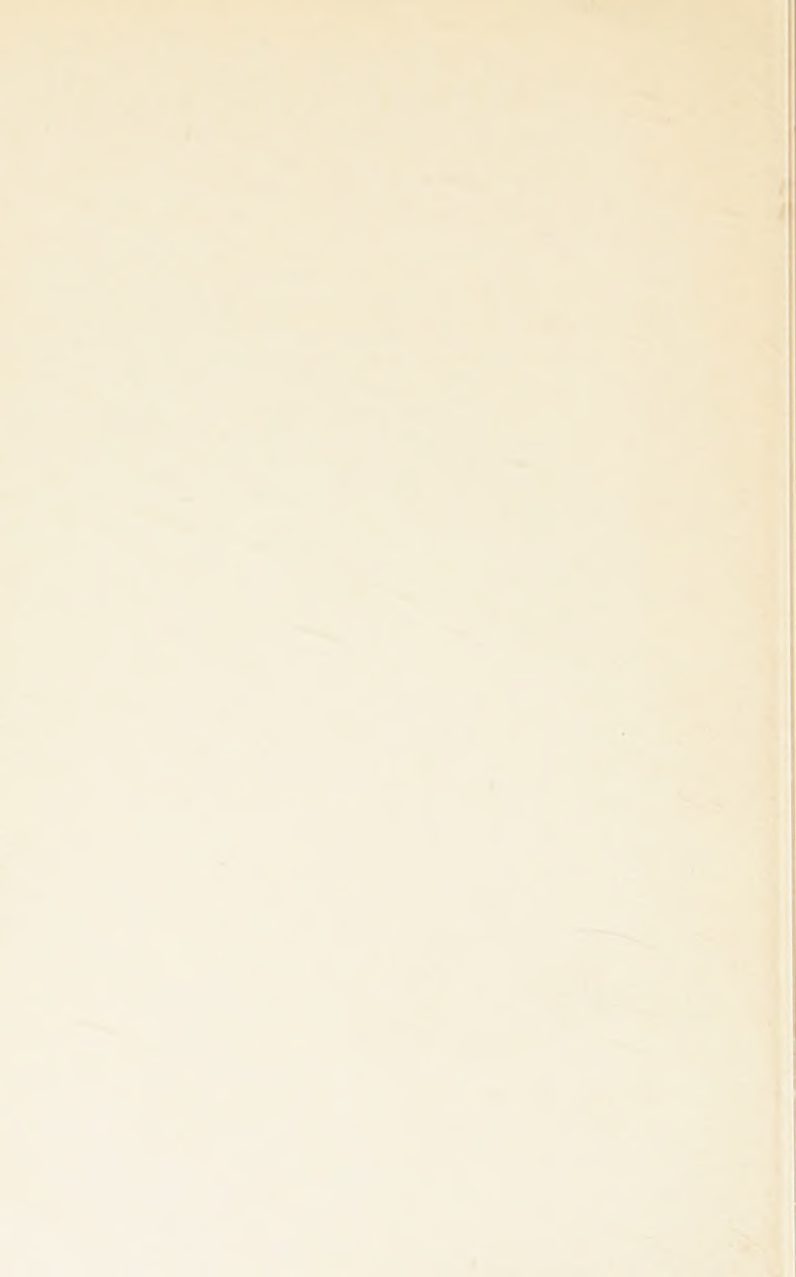






Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

ON TO CHRIST
THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW ERA



ON TO CHRIST

THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW ERA

BY

EDWIN A. McALPIN, JR., D.D.

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE BOARD OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U. S. A.

VIRGINIA LIBRARY

RECORDS

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NEW



YORK

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

Copyright, 1919
By George H. Doran Company

YRABILL AIBIOXIV
YOBIBOON
YRABIB32 JADBOLOBT

Printed in the United States of America

TO MY WIFE
MY MOST CONSTANT BUT
EVER KINDLY CRITIC

INTRODUCTION

THE PRESENT CRISIS

THE Past is the foundation on which we work. The Present is our field of activity. The Future is what we work for.

In facing the present Crisis of Christianity in entering the New Era we must keep these facts clearly in mind. The Church cannot afford to spend its energy and strength in merely conserving the things of the Past. The foundation has been well laid, and we do not have to worry about it. We can learn some lessons from its mistakes and in faith we must go ahead and build. The Future is hidden in the mist, but through the mist we catch glimpses of prominent features and probabilities; keeping our eyes on these things we must forge ahead. The Present is filled with perplexities and opportunities. We may make many blunders, but only the coward will falter, as the greatest blunder of all is to do nothing. We must see as clearly as possible, think deeply and act quickly. The crisis is upon us and failure now is irreparable. We must go for-

ward, and our motto should be "On to Christ."

There are some people who have failed to grasp the significance of the rapid changes that are taking place in our civilisation and religious ideas. They expect to return to pre-war times shortly after peace has been declared. They do not realise that the war has destroyed many things besides the economic life of Belgium and the dynasties of Europe. They fail to realise the effect that the army training and war experiences will have on America. They fail to take account of spiritual influences that are bound to follow on the world-wide upheaval that has taken place.

One of the cardinal sins of the Church is her desire to walk forward while she keeps her eyes on the past. She has been so deeply interested in her study of the faith of the Fathers that she has often forgotten that her main duty is to create the faith of their sons. The faith of the Fathers was all right. It served to make them men of God and it was the cradle of true democracy. That same faith needs to be applied in a new way to meet the problems of the New Era.

The Church has been trying to go ahead like a man who walks forward with his head twisted over his shoulder and his eyes fixed on an object far behind him. A man walking in that un-

natural way cannot keep a straight line—neither can a Church. He will bump into every object that crosses his path—so will the Church. He will hurt himself and many others on the street—so will the Church.

The time has come for the Church to turn her eyes to the front—this means getting her attention on the future. Here is our real problem. Will the Church be big enough and strong enough to stamp its character on the new civilisation that is being born out of the world travail of the present time? If it fails the world will suffer a great loss. It will be due to the weakness of the ecclesiastical mind and the prejudices of those who are unwilling to learn new spiritual truths. It cannot fail if the men of the Church really know the power and purpose of Christ.

The war, with its terrific loss of life, destruction of property, overturning of dynasties, and social upheavals, has affected the mind and heart of the whole world. In the general readjustment of the processes of production and social relationships the ideas of thinking men are bound to change. Religious conceptions are sure to feel this influence. If Christianity continues to cling to the past and fails to apply the truth to new conditions in a practical way, she will fail to stamp her character on the institu-

tions and policies that will affect the spiritual life of millions of people as yet unborn.

The Purpose

The object of this study is to bring home to all thoughtful minds some of the problems of the Church in dealing with the opportunities of the New Era. An effort is made in the first half of this book to point out the failures of the past, and then in the last half we try to show how the Church can meet these problems in a practical way. The problem is outlined in the first chapter and then different phases of it are discussed with suggestions of how they should be met in the following chapters. In the Second Part we make some practical suggestions on the reconstruction of the Church's life and thought. Some of these solutions may seem radical, but it must be remembered that structural weaknesses cannot be permanently repaired by superficial patches. The structure must be rebuilt and the weakness must be eliminated. It may be impossible to get unanimous support for suggestions that seem to affect whole ecclesiastical organisations, but no other alternative seems adequate to meet the needs of the New Era.

For years the Church has been talking Feder-

ation and Unity. The time has come to stop talking and make some experiments in Federating our religious forces and unifying their work. This cannot be done at once in every field, but it can be worked out in sparsely settled communities where the multiplication of Protestant churches merely breeds or continues petty local jealousies. The number of weak and struggling churches is more often a disgrace to the denomination that supports them than a credit to its Christian statesmanship, as many weak churches could be eliminated by uniting different Protestant organisations in sparsely settled communities.

It is possible to outline the theological conceptions that must control this movement without trying to write a creed. If such a creed is needed it can be worked out by theologians of spiritual vision and broad sympathy. It will be another interesting document for future generations to study and then pigeonhole. The true Creed of Christ is written in His life and work, and it must be rewritten anew in the life of each generation for itself.

The purpose of this study is to show that the Christianity of Christ was broader and more spiritual than the creed of any Church. The creeds are merely man's efforts to define what their authors believed was Christ's interpreta-

tion of religion. They are limited by the scientific knowledge and philosophical conceptions of the age in which they were written. It is hoped that some men who have mistaken the definitions for the things that were being defined will realise that they too can join with the Church in the spiritual work of saving the world and establishing it in the righteousness of Christ.

In solving the problems of the New Era the world needs the guidance and wisdom of God. The only way that we can get into touch with the mind of God is through prayer, and therefore the Church must cultivate in its people as never before the habit of prayer. If life is spiritual and the solution of its problems is only found in spiritual help, we should guard against thinking of this life and the life beyond the grave as being two different lives. Life is one. Therefore the Church cannot limit its message to this world. Men need a practical application of the Gospel of Eternal Hope to heal their wounded hearts.

The culmination of the criticisms made and the efforts at reconstruction offered comes in the last chapter, where the keynote of our conclusion is found in the phrase "On to Christ." This is not merely a new shibboleth, it is also a program of work. It means a truer interpretation of Christ and a more thoroughgoing

effort to follow His leadership and to avail ourselves of His power.

The Sources

The material for this study has been drawn from the author's own experiences in different fields of Christian work. It was his privilege to act as the Y. M. C. A. Director of Religious Work at one of the army cantonments for three months. The duties of this position brought him into close personal contact with the chaplains, camp pastors, and all the religious work in the cantonment. This position was the strategic centre of all the religious work in camp and gave a unique opportunity for seeing both its details and also its larger outlines.

The writer has also visited a number of camps as a preacher or lecturer. These experiences have broadened the impressions gained by the intensive study of the religious life of one camp.

The men in camp gave a unique opportunity to study the opinions and interests of the men of the country. They were just "home folks," but they showed how the masculine element of home folks really felt and thought.

The author spent a good part of five years during his student days in a social settlement with all the problems of a great city seething

by the door. For several years while pastor of a city church he had the privilege of acting as chairman of the committee that had charge of the Home Mission work of a whole State. This position revealed the inside problems of many village and country churches. These experiences laid the foundation for the ideas expressed in the following pages, which are illustrated by incidents from actual life.

The chapter on the "Crystallisation of the Religion of the Inarticulate" has been based on personal experiences in several places and a study of books written by men who have known the soldier in the trenches. Donald Hankoy's *Student in Arms* (youth series), Chaplain Tip-lady's *The Cross at the Front*, *Papers from Picardy* by Two Chaplains, and *The Heart of a Soldier* by Laughlan Maclean Watt are some of the books used. The opinions expressed as to the significance and importance of the campaign of education carried on by the Government and the welfare organisations of the Army are based on actual experiences in this work.

Although the writer has had no opportunity to know our men at the front, he rejoices in the privilege of having spent enough time in one cantonment to really know the spirit of our National Army.

Where use has been made of the observations of studies of others this is indicated in the text. The author regrets that they cannot be mentioned by name, but their personal request for obviously good reasons has made this impossible.

The incident quoted in the chapter on "Practical Work in the Army and at Home" to illustrate the chasm between labour and capital is not intended as a reflection on the labour movement. The writer believes in organised labour. This incident is merely used in an effort to awaken the mind of the Church to the seriousness of the misunderstanding that exists between these groups at the present time. The whole future of the world depends on getting these two antagonistic classes into a different mental attitude toward each other. The Church is the only institution that can do this.

The chapter on "Practical Immortality" received some suggestions from the article that appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* in the spring of 1918 on "The New Death" by Winifred Kirkland. Just how much is due to this article is doubtful, but it is a pleasure to confess the stimulus it gave.

It is impossible to go into more detail as to where these thoughts have come from. They have been inspired by books, magazines,

articles, conversations, and the present conditions in the world.

This little study deals with big things. It is not expected that the Protestant Churches can be moved at once to make any radical readjustments to meet the problems of the New Era. It is hoped that a brief statement of actual conditions can stimulate discussion and awaken criticism. Out of this discussion and criticism something practical may come.

In conclusion I desire to acknowledge the courtesy of the editors of *The Continent* and *The Presbyterian Advance* in allowing me to use material that has appeared from time to time as articles in their magazines.

CONTENTS

PART I

THE PAST: ITS WEAKNESS AND FAILURES

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	THE CHURCH'S PERIL AND ITS CAUSE	21
II	THE CHURCH AND HER MEN . . .	42
III	THE WEAKNESS OF THE DENOMINA- TIONAL APPEAL	60
IV	THE NEED OF A PRACTICAL CHRIS- TIANITY	81
V	CRYSTALLISING THE RELIGION OF THE INARTICULATE	99

PART II

THE FUTURE: ITS HOPE AND PROMISE

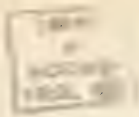
VI	THE RETURN OF FAITH	115
VII	SPIRITUAL ORTHODOXY	125
VIII	THE POWER OF PRAYER	144
IX	PRACTICAL IMMORTALITY	156
X	ON TO CHRIST	167



PART I

THE PAST: ITS WEAKNESS
AND FAILURE





I

THE CHURCH'S PERIL AND ITS CAUSES

THE Churches of America are facing at this time the possibility of one of the greatest failures in history.

The whole nation is seething with spiritual unrest and vague aspirations and almost no one is looking to the Church for a solution of his problems. This is a blunt statement of an unpleasant fact, but it sometimes takes a shock to shake the easy-going self-confidence of our church people and their spiritual leaders. There is a tendency to always evade an unpleasant situation by plausible excuses and it is only by holding before our eyes these unpleasant facts that we realise the danger that confronts the Church.

In recent months there has been a noticeable falling off in church attendance in one of our typical Eastern States. The secretary of an Inter-Church society reports that on his trips throughout the State he finds small congregations and discouraged ministers everywhere. The superintendent of Home Missions of one

Protestant denomination in this State reports that he has noticed the same situation in the churches under his care. Here we have the observations of two men on the spiritual life of a whole State. This does not represent a neglected field, as in this area there are at least four theological seminaries. Some people may try to explain this situation by saying that the people in this State have been so much occupied in the war-welfare work that they have no time for church attendance. That is an explanation that does not explain. If the people had felt the need of the spiritual help that their churches gave, their activities in behalf of others would have made them go to church and not kept them away.

This same lack of interest in the Church's spiritual message is shown by the kind of books that people are reading. People read the books that either interest or help them. The publishers of religious literature say that there is no interest in this country in any books that deal with the spiritual lessons of the war. People simply will not read them. Here we find the greatest war of history closing and the people of our country absolutely indifferent to its spiritual lessons. This lack of church attendance and indifference to the lessons from the war show the state of mind that the Church

must deal with in its effort to awaken the conscience of America.

For a clear understanding of the situation that confronts the Church it is necessary to review the things that have caused it.

America's Lack of Spiritual Reaction

With all our sacrifices in the use of food substitutes and in saving the money we wanted to spend so as to buy our share of bonds and in giving the money we wanted to save to help the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. we have not felt the burden of the war enough to cause a spiritual reaction. The shortages of wheat and sugar were merely temporary inconveniences. Our purchase of United States bonds was too good an investment to be called a sacrifice and the sums we gave to the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. were not excessive.

We entered the conflict at just the right moment and the heroism of our Army in one short severe campaign was the turning-point of the conflict. If this struggle had continued for several years and if the loss of life in our forces had reached the same proportion of our population as it did in England and France, the horror would have sunk deeply into our soul. Men would have been forced to think of

God. They would not have gloried so much in their own power, as they would have been forced to realise their own weakness.

There is grave danger that a spirit of self-satisfaction will be developed instead of a spirit of humility. The danger of having our spiritual life weakened and side-tracked is so imminent that it is startling, and yet we are just as blind to this danger as we were to the German avalanche of August 1, 1914.

This weakened spiritual interest is not caused entirely by the lack of reaction to the war stimulus. It is too deep-seated a malady to have grown up in three or four years. The influences that affect the religious life and thought of a nation have to be studied for a period of thirty or forty years to be understood, as religious ideas spread slowly and take time to affect a nation.

During the period preceding the Great War there were several causes at work that were weakening the spiritual hold of the Churches on the life of the nation.

The Critical Controversy

The first of these was the critical controversy that has been going on among theologians. The introduction of the scientific method of study in

Biblical subjects has overturned some things that were held to be sacred by an older generation. This method of study caused ministers to take sides, and the controversy raged merrily over the question of whether we have a Pentateuch or a Hexateuch; whether Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament or whether they were a compilation from other authors showing in many places the hand of an editor. The questions of the historicity of Daniel and Jonah have filled the minds and ears of many thoughtful Christians to such an extent that they have entirely forgotten the messages contained in the books they were quarrelling over.

This whole controversy has taken up energies that might have been better used in trying to make clear the personality and work of Jesus Christ. The theories of the students and the investigations of the scholars have constantly been aired from the pulpit before they were completely worked out. These investigations have their place in the study, but they should be kept there. When properly used they form a valuable background, but when used controversially they only create mental uncertainties and spiritual unrest. The champions of the old theories have spent more time in defining their theories than in trying to make men see a living Saviour. They did not think it was possible for

a man to know Jesus Christ as his Redeemer unless this man agreed with their opinions on the books of Moses and Jonah. Both sides unintentionally have been throwing stumbling-blocks in the way of the Church and preventing the man on the street from getting a grip on spiritual truth. We have merely accepted some of the destructive principles of the scientific method of Bible study and have failed to assimilate a spiritual conception of Jesus Christ.

We do not need less science in our Bible study, but we need a great deal more spiritual assimilation. We have fallen into the old sin of the Scribe and Pharisee of repeating text on text and quoting authority on authority and forgetting the spiritual life that Christ imparts.

This controversy has developed four different types of theologians. They do not classify themselves, but we will do it for our own convenience and to clarify our own minds.

First, We have the Liberal-Liberals, occupying the extreme Right in this controversy. They accept every scientific conclusion and many conclusions that are only called scientific. They are not only severely critical in their Bible study, but they have also lost their sense of spiritual values. They have no use for anything that seems mystical and is beyond the analysis of their intellectual laboratories. Many of

them are real Trinitarians in their theology but are so vague in their philosophy that they fail to give any adequate help to the spiritual needs of men. They are the champion exponents of good works and reform movements. Their loss of spiritual sense has created a white-heated humanitarianism. You find them opposing social, economic, and civic wrongs and working night and day in the cause of human betterment. All honour them for their zeal and activity, but the man of deep spiritual interest regrets their diminished interests in the spiritual side of Christ's Gospel.

Second, There is another group that has often been overlooked. They are what we might call the Conservative-Liberals. Their fundamental intellectual position is that of the liberal school. They believe in and practise the scientific method of Bible study, but they also see the hand of God moving in a unique way through the life of the Israelitish nation. They do not care to press their theory as to the authorship of Old Testament books. They realise that the authors may be unknown, but they know that God spake through holy men in times past. They are striving to hear God's voice and interpret His message to the present age. Their object and interest differ a good deal from those that we have called the Liberal-Liberals. They

want to bring Christ as a Saviour into the lives of sinful men. They desire to see God's Kingdom established on earth, but they also want to keep the spiritual and personal emphasis which Christ gave to all His teachings.

Third, We have the Liberal-Conservatives. These are the men whose fundamental theological conceptions are based on the principles established in the time of the Reformation. They are honestly convinced of the traditional conception of the Bible and the authors of its various books. But they are neither hurt nor troubled by those who have reached a different conclusion, for they are men of liberal spirit and they recognise that many students who disagree with them on questions of research are absolutely one with them in purpose and spirit. They do not yield one iota of their own conceptions, but they possess large minds and are of such a deep spiritual nature that they realise the oneness of purpose of all those that are working for Christ's Kingdom, even if their theological opinions widely differ.

The spirit of the Liberal-Conservatives can be best shown by an incident that happened some years ago at a meeting of a Presbytery. A young candidate of the ultra-Liberal-Liberal type had been examined and Presbytery was preparing to vote as to whether he should be

ordained or not. One of the men of strong conservative convictions arose and said that he absolutely disagreed with the position taken by the candidate but he was pleased with the careful preparation of the young man and the clearness of his statements. This conservative theologian then went on to say that he realised that it was possible for men to hold different opinions and still work together in the same Church and he was prepared to vote for the young man's ordination although he still disagreed with the liberal position. Such breadth of spirit is not only commendable, it is far more than that—it is an indication of the way theological problems should be solved. The bitterness of argument is conquered by the spirituality that lifts men above their own opinions by bringing the disputants face to face with the Christ they both serve.

The last class are the Conservative-Conservatives. They are conservative both in theoretical conception and in spiritual practice. They believe in the verbal inspiration of Scripture and they pronounce anathemas on the scientific-historical method and all who practise it. They condemn a man who teaches that the Book of Jonah is a divine parable containing a great spiritual truth if he fails to accept the absolute historicity of both Jonah and his book.

In this and in many other ways they exalt the letter of the law far above the spirit. They do not like to burn sinners at the stake, for they are not brutal, but they greatly enjoy holding them up to public scorn not merely for their own edification, but also for the pleasure of seeing the sinner squirm. Like their predecessors, the Scribes of the time of Christ, they are great students of Scripture and can quote text after text and prove themselves, to their own satisfaction, the only champions of God's Kingdom on earth. They are out of touch with reform movements and they continue sounding out the old shibboleths much to their own satisfaction and to the hampering of God's message to their own generation. They occupy the extreme Left wing of Theology.

The unreasonable attitude of the Conservative-Conservatives was once shown when two candidates for the Gospel ministry were being examined for ordination by another Presbytery. One of them was a good-hearted, earnest man of no education but of fluent speech. He could quote the Shorter Catechism and the Scriptures and he was accepted at once. The other had been for years an ordained minister in another denomination. He was a college and seminary graduate and a careful student of philosophy and theology. He explained at length and with

great care his theological beliefs and gave the reasons why he thought he could do better work in the Presbyterian Church than in the denomination he had formerly served. For several hours one or two men heckled him and exhorted Presbytery on the danger of admitting such a man into their midst. The leaders of this opposition were men of mediocre education but self-satisfied in their orthodoxy. They missed the glib quotations from the Shorter Catechism and Scriptures and were hopelessly out of their depths in the philosophical and theological language of the trained student. It is one of our misfortunes that the Church of today has to contend with the antagonisms that are created by men of this type. They cannot comprehend any point of view but their own, and they try to force all minds into the same mould.

The hope of the present time lies in the spiritual message of the men that occupy the middle ground of this theological controversy. The Conservative-Liberals and the Liberal-Conservatives work well together, and from different standpoints seek the same goal. The extreme Right wing and the extreme Left wing will always have a small following, but the spiritual problem of the present time must be worked out by the men who are not theological extremists.

America is tired of theological theories and America wants a spiritual power to grip its soul. The arguments and controversies that have been carried on by these different parties have made the laymen turn away in despair from all forms of Christianity and the Churches are suffering from this spiritual despair.

Entertainment Substituted for Inspiration

There is another tendency that has existed in recent years in the Churches of America that has destroyed their spiritual power. This is the tendency to substitute different forms of entertainment for the spiritual inspiration of Christ and His truth.

It is due to the pleasure-loving nature of the American people and to a desire on the part of the ministers to fill their churches. The desire to have a full church is a laudable one. No eloquence or spiritual power can affect empty pews. They cannot be trained into a more godly walk in life than that which they already practise.

A message to accomplish results must be given to people and not to empty pews. When the pews began to empty then the wide-awake minister started to find some way in which to fill them. In some cases he started to preach

on so-called "popular" subjects. He dealt with politics, reform movements, and present-day questions. When these subjects appealed to the imagination of his community he would find an increase in his congregation. When they failed to attain this result he often instituted other entertainment features. The music was improved and the amount of it was increased. The sermon was shortened, and instead of a real sermon with a real message we had sermonettes whose only virtues were their brevity and their finished rhetoric. The minister had unconsciously been counting the number of people in the church and not the number of souls that were being reached.

The Gospel of Christ is a message of salvation and not an entertainment programme. Stereopticon lectures, moving-picture shows, and discussions of current events have their place in the programme of the wide-awake church, but their place is not to be a substitute for the Gospel message at the time of the stated church services.

We reduce this whole programme to an absurdity when we try to think of Isaiah giving a stereopticon lecture on the Flora and Fauna of Palestine or Jeremiah giving a moving-picture show of the Army of Israel Passing in Review before the King. Could we think of

Jesus of Nazareth inviting the Scribes and Pharisees to listen to Him while He discussed the current events of the Roman Empire at the Passover Feast? Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jesus Christ are the prophets of God with a message to the souls of men. Those who claim to be their successors need the same power and the same message to grip the heart and conscience of their own generation.

Experience has proved time and time again that the best of music and the finest stereopticon lecture and even the best educational moving-pictures fail to hold the interest of the people. For a small sum of money they can get these entertainments at any time they so desire.

There is no other place but the church where the souls of men can get the training of God's Word and can be brought into touch with a living Saviour. Anxious minds, tired hearts, and sin-sick souls want God. The church is God's agent to bring His message to His children, and when it substitutes entertainment for inspiration it loses its power and unconsciously people look upon attendance as a matter to be subordinated to their own convenience and lose the habit of going to church as a spiritual privilege and sacred obligation.

The Dangers of a Lay Religion

There has also been growing up in our country a conception of Christianity which we may call that of "Lay Religion." This began as an effort to get the laymen of the Church interested and active in its work. This effort was a good one, and the more the laity work in the Church the better it is for the Church and also for the men, but this conception of Christianity developed some unfortunate features. While the Church needs the coöperation of all her men she must guard them against a conception of Christianity that underrates her spiritual power.

Men commenced to talk about the Church as an important and helpless institution that needed to have business methods of efficiency and advertisement introduced to save it from speedy destruction. The ministers were unconsciously pictured as past masters of inefficiency and absolutely incapable of working out their church problems. We have had talks on advertisement methods for churches and the introduction of new and up-to-date methods of organisation until the laymen have unintentionally convinced themselves that the Church with-

out their business methods would fail in its mission.

The absurdity of this idea is quickly seen when we try to conceive a man like the prophet Amos engaging a publicity expert to get him an audience at Bethel, the king's chapel. This poor gatherer of the sycamore fruit so stirred the hearts of that people that the crafty Amaziah, high priest and ecclesiastical diplomat, begged him to take both himself and his message back to Judah, as such burning words were not fitting for such an aristocratic spot. Amos did not need advertisement or business methods. He had a message that gripped men's hearts and consciences, and when they heard it they were mightily stirred.

It is possible by business methods and careful advertisement to build up a fictitious success that lasts for a short time. The real success of the Christian Church comes when it delivers a message that rebukes sin, awakens conscience, and inspires spiritual aspirations and hope.

The laity have begun to feel that they were not in as much need of the Church as the Church was in need of their help. Such a wrong conception destroys the compelling power of the moral conscience and creates a feeling of superiority in the laymen's mind and is destructive to all true religion. When a man feels that he is

patronising the Church by his presence and by his work and fails to realise his own personal need of a Saviour the dynamic of Christianity is gone. This spirit gives undue prominence to people of social prestige and wealth and it overlooks the real men and women of God who may not have a great deal of social standing or much wealth but who do have strong souls and noble hearts.

This idea of a Lay Religion has done more harm than we realise. Its effects are seen in the spiritual life of our country at this time. Every one wants the men of the Church to be active and work, but they should realise that the Church with its message is greater than they are and the Church is honouring them by taking them into spiritual partnership.

The ministers should do everything in their power to develop the laymen by the organisation of the men in the local church and by coöperating with all such movements as the Laymen's Missionary Movement and the Men and Religion Movement, but at the same time the minister should oppose any tendency to belittle or ignore the spiritual authority of the Church. The men must not be discouraged and they should be taught to use their business training in church work so as to conserve and emphasise the real meaning of the Church, which is spiritual.

The Materialistic Spirit

The last of the things that have been weakening the Church which we will have time to consider is the Materialistic Spirit. America, as has often been said, has been preëminently a materialistic nation.

We are here using the term "Materialistic Spirit" to define that love of pleasure, based on the enjoyment of material things, which as a spirit has largely prevailed among the people of this country. It makes the rich man's son spend his time in playing golf, polo, or tennis; it makes people of moderate means buy an automobile before they can afford it, in some cases going so far as to mortgage their homes so as to be able to indulge in the pleasure of motoring; it makes the poor man spend all his earnings as fast as he gets them in having a good time.

It is the spirit that permeates all walks of society and destroys the nation's sense of the moral obligations imposed by personal possessions. Money is considered a useful thing that gives its owner the right of enjoying himself as long as his money lasts. This spirit destroys the sense of responsibility to God for the right use of our possessions. Unfortunately this spirit exists in this country in the mansions of

the rich, in the cottages of the well-to-do, and in the tenements of our great cities.

This spirit is a natural outgrowth of our past, it springs from the personal experience of our fathers and the example they established. Our fathers had to solve so many problems in overcoming the difficulties that nature presented to them in their efforts to create a civilised nation that they unintentionally became absorbed in this struggle. They had to cut down the forests, build roads and railroads, dig out the coal and iron, and span mighty rivers with their bridges. They had to build homes, villages, and cities to make the wilderness habitable. In one century they changed a wilderness of mountains, forests, and rolling prairies into a mighty and well-organised nation.

All the energies of their bodies and souls have been absorbed in this struggle. They have been often wearied to the point of exhaustion. Now they desire to enjoy the fruit of their labours and to see their children enjoy it. They want things to be pleasant and easy-going. The drastic demands of a stern moral conscience repel them. Their weakened ideas of morality have had a marked influence on our national life and have established dangerous precedents.

Sunday has become their day of rest and recreation. They give their week-days to hard

work and in many cases to those movements that seek to ameliorate the living conditions of their less fortunate neighbours. On Sunday they want to play golf, take motor trips, attend baseball games, or seek some other form of amusement. They simply want to enjoy themselves, and in many cases enjoy themselves without harm to any one else. They come back to their toil on Monday physically rested and that is all. A few churches have given a quasi approval to this conception of life. These people have forgotten that God meant the Sabbath Day to be a day of physical rest and spiritual recreation. It is not enough to merely enjoy ourselves on the Sabbath and rest our bodies. If we are to keep our souls alive there must be some periods when they are renewed and refreshed. The Sabbath was intended for this purpose.

The soul of the American people was sleeping. Some people feared that it was dead, but it was only sleeping. The Great War awakened it and the easy-going, pleasure-loving sons of our rich men proved in the air, on the battlefield, and on the sea that they were made of the material that creates martyrs and heroes. It took this shock to galvanise our spiritual life into action and make it fully awake. These people now think in terms of patriotism and

loyalty. Those are the things that gave them ideals for which to work and die.

The Church must catch this spirit before it goes to sleep again, if we are to save our country from another generation of materialism. This materialistic spirit has weakened the Church's hold and makes it hard for the Church to do its work at this time.

But materialism has been weakened by the ideals of patriotism that have been brought forth by the war. It can be completely overthrown by a clear presentation of the person and power of Jesus Christ.

The things that we have been considering, namely, America's Lack of Spiritual Reaction, The Critical Controversy, The Substitution of Entertainment for Inspiration, The Lay Religion, and The Materialistic Spirit, are some of the things that hinder the Church's spiritual work and prevent men from looking to her for guidance at this time.

These things have all worked together and in different ways to side-track the spirituality of Christianity. We have tried to substitute many things for Christ's appeal to the conscience, and they have all failed.

In the following chapters we will consider some of the special problems that confront the Church.

II

THE CHURCH AND HER MEN

THE National Army cantonments gave a unique opportunity to study the manhood of America as the Government called to the colours all its young men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one, except the physically unfit, the mentally incompetent, and the clergymen. The clergy did not like the company in which the Government placed them, and so they came of their own accord. They were present by scores and hundreds in every camp either as chaplains or Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. workers or officers and privates. When the critic of the Church is tempted to criticise the ministry because it was exempted by the Government from military service, let him remember that the clergymen did not accept this exemption, but freely and of their own volition volunteered for that field of service they felt most capable of filling. So, except for the physically unfit and mentally incompetent, these cantonments held a great cross-section of American manhood.

They contained college graduates and men who could not write their own names, millionaires and hod carriers, farmers and tenement dwellers, the Sons of the American Revolution and men who could not speak the English language. The size of the group was at first appalling, but a residence there showed these men to be just like the men you meet in colleges, in Social Settlement work, on the farm, or in the lumber camps. The uniform made them all look alike, but they were still individuals with their own point of view and their own type of character.

A longer residence and better acquaintance created a deeper interest and a growing respect, as a finer group of men has never been gathered together. The observer could see the real man and true citizen behind the broken English. The uniform was an added help, as it is surprising how much the college graduate and hod carrier look alike when they are dressed in the same clothes.

They were all living together under new and peculiar conditions, and the ties of home with its customs and habits were broken. You could see the true man and you could study his real interests. There has never been such an opportunity for investigating the religious interests of a nation's manhood and the lessons learned

here can be of inestimable value to the Church, as this cross-section of our men brought out clearly some of the most interesting and surprising facts concerning the religious life of America.

*The Failure of the Church to Hold Her
Young Men*

The most surprising thing that the religious work in the cantonments showed was the number of men that were out of sympathy with all churches. Many of the ministers spoke of the smallness of their congregations compared to the thousands of men in camp. Apparently these good men had come to camp with the expectation of preaching to great gatherings of several thousand men. In another place we show that the difference between the number of men that could attend the services and those that came was not so great as it first appeared. But in that later study it is only claimed that from thirty to fifty per cent. of the Protestants in camp on Sunday with nothing else to do attended any services. Is the Church to be satisfied if a bare half of her men, who are otherwise idle, only care enough for Christianity to go to a brief service on Sunday?

The chaplains, camp pastor, and Y.M.C.A.

workers were troubled by this situation. Almost every one was shocked when he first took up the work by the number of men that were indifferent to the services. Familiarity with small congregations in time dulled their sensibilities. They had to face a difficult situation, and they made the best of it. Their first impression was one of surprise and disappointment, and that is the thing of interest to us. It showed that the ministers and other Christian workers in the Army thought that there was a deeper interest in spiritual things among the men of our nation than they actually found in the religious life of a cantonment. These men were intelligent workers in their own churches at home, as only men of broad interests went into this work. They reflected in a measure the opinion of the Church. The Church has thought that more men were interested in Christianity than the actual experience in the cantonments proved to be the case.

The question immediately arises whether this lack of interest in spiritual things was due to the peculiar atmosphere of army life or whether the grouping of men in a cantonment simply revealed a condition that already existed in the church at home. Has the Church failed to hold her young men in the past to the extent shown in the services at our cantonments?

I am convinced that this lack of interest in religious services was not a new thing for our young men. It was merely a manifestation of how many of our young men are absolutely out of sympathy with the Church. If we eliminated all men over thirty-one and under twenty-one years of age at our men's meetings at home we would quickly realise this fact. These meetings are padded with old men and boys and the scarcity of the virile young men is overlooked. Most of the young men seldom darken the door of a church at home and they would not go to a religious service at camp.

This opinion is based on the following brief studies all of which point to the same conclusion.

The Study of an Officers' Mess

A minister went to one of the cantonments as camp pastor. He spent three months in the work, and all of that time he was a member of the same officers' mess. He had very pleasant and friendly relations with these officers. The night before he left camp he asked them if they would be willing to fill out a brief questionnaire as he was anxious to get some information on the religious influences and tendencies of army life, and hand it in without signing their names.

They readily granted his request and fifty-six of them filled it out. A summary of these fifty-six answers has been placed in my hands and a study of this summary shows some very interesting things.

Forty of those who filled it out were church members and sixteen were not members of any church. Their church preferences covered eleven denominations and five had no church preference at all. Forty of them were praying men and sixteen did not pray. One answered this question as "Doubtful" and another said "Not of late." Only thirty-five had Testaments and twenty-one were without them.

The most important information from the standpoint of this study of the religious life in the cantonments was contained in the answers to the last two questions.

The fifth question was: "Does army life make you more religious or less?" Out of the fifty-six questionnaires filled out thirty-five left this question unanswered. Eleven said, "Neither." Six thought it made them more religious and four thought it made them less so. It is a fair presumption to believe that the thirty-five who failed to answer this question did not recognise any definite change in their religious life due to army conditions. This added to the eleven who admitted that their spiritual interests had

not changed and the almost equal division between those that were more and less religious seems to show that life in a cantonment did not seriously change a man's religious convictions. It was possible that these men were more religious, but if so they were unconscious of it. It was a religious interest not defined by their preconceived ideas. It would be something not definable by church services and religious habits. There are other things in army life that indicate this larger spiritual interest. They will be discussed later in our study of the "Crystallisation of the Religion of the Inarticulate."

The sixth question was: "What, if any, service can a chaplain render you?" Sixteen left this question unanswered. Two said that the chaplain could render them no service and twenty-eight looked on the chaplain's work favourably. It is interesting to know that only six of the twenty-eight that believed in the chaplain's work defined his work in a spiritual sense. These six spoke of the importance of holding religious services. All the others indicated in different ways, but quite clearly, that they thought the chaplain's main opportunity was in personal contact with the men and officers, and that his real work was in doing practical things such as "Personal talks with indi-

viduals," "Setting a good example," "In conduct of men," etc.

Whatever we may think of these answers it is quite evident that they indicate that the men of this mess did not recognise any marked decrease of the religious interests due to army life. There is even a slight tendency to show that they were more religious than at home.

There were the same number of praying men as there were church members and not all of these men had Testaments. The significant thing in this connection is that they could have had a Testament by merely asking for one at the nearest Y.M.C.A. Hut. They could not have been in the habit of reading their Bibles, for if they had they certainly would have had a Testament, as it was the easiest book to get in camp.

The only conclusion we draw from this study is that it gives no indication that these officers were less religious in camp than they had been at home.

The Opinions of a Soldiers' Bible Class

Some of the soldiers who knew the life in the barracks by actual experience thought that army life increased the number of men who attended religious services. This was shown

by a discussion on this subject which took place in a Bible class held in a mess hall in February, 1918.

There were five or six men present, and all of them had been in camp for three or four months. They were clear-headed men who had been church men at home. They agreed without a dissenting voice and without a shadow of doubt that more men attended the Sunday services in camp than ever went to church at home. One of them volunteered the further information, which the others acquiesced in, that "A very great many more men go to the week-night service of the Y.M.C.A. than ever thought of going to prayer meeting." It is interesting to know that this group of men also thought that more men were reading their Bibles and praying than ever did these things at home. It was almost if not quite impossible to get statistics of these facts, as some of the men only read their Bibles when they thought no one was looking and others prayed under their blankets after Taps. The amount of weight that should be given to this sort of testimony may be open to question, but the opinion of the men in the barracks ought to be worth more than the superficial observations of any visitor, even if he did happen to live in the camp. Here again we get evidence that the absence of the

men from the religious services was not due to the conditions of camp life. More were going than had gone before, but in camp the small number of the young men at the service was emphasised by having no old men or women and children to fill up the room.

The Honour Roll

Some people may think that these unpleasant facts fit some other church, but as far as their own church is concerned they are satisfied by the number of names that it has on its honour roll.

A study of the honour rolls of a number of churches shows that many of the men whose names are enrolled there are really out of touch with the church. Most pastors have placed the name of every man that has left his parish for service in either the Army or Navy on the honour roll of the church. If a family calls on a minister to conduct their funeral services or to perform their marriage ceremonies they are naturally considered a part of that parish. When their boy has been called to the colours they like to know that his name is on the honour roll of the church. The churches have recognised this desire and gladly placed these names on their honour rolls.

This was the right thing to do. It increases the hold of the church in these homes and prevents the family from having their feelings hurt. No one wants them to feel that their son has been either overlooked or ignored. They are often sensitive and easily hurt. For their sake, and also as a possible means of reaching these men when they come home, all these names should be put on the honour roll. But the Church must be very careful not to draw erroneous conclusions from the number of names on the honour roll. Many of these names simply indicate the men the Church ought to have reached in the past but which she has failed to reach. She is now trying to reach them by friendly sympathy and by honouring them for their service to our country.

A questionnaire was recently sent out to all the churches of a nearby Presbytery. This group of churches was chosen because it was certain that the big majority of them would take the trouble to answer the questions. It included both large and small, strong and weak, country and suburban churches. It represented a distinctly American church-going community.

Twenty six churches answered these questions. Two of them did not tabulate their answers because of the peculiar local conditions in a small village, the honour rolls were a vil-

lage and not a church affair. These twenty-four answers showed that the churches represented had six hundred and sixty-five names on their honour rolls. One hundred and ninety-five of these men were active in the church work. Three hundred and fifty-one, including the active church workers, were regular in attendance at church services and two hundred and forty-six seldom or never attended church. The discrepancy between the total number of those who attended church and those who did not attend was due to the number of men away from home either at college or at work. In a number of cases the pastors said they were not in close enough touch with these men because of their absence from home to know about their church habits. These figures are startling. Out of the six hundred and sixty-five names on the honour rolls of these churches only about half of them are known to be regular church attendants and two hundred and forty-six are seldom or never at church.

This study of the honour roll of twenty-four churches shows that the same state of affairs exists at home as existed in a cantonment. The honour roll does not show the number of men that have been interested in the church. It shows instead the number of men that the church is interested in. Which is a very differ-

ent thing. It shows the number of men that the church is responsible for. It is a revelation of the churches' opportunity. A study of the honour roll emphasises the churches' failure in dealing with men.

Conclusion

When the results of these different lines of investigation are combined we get their full significance. The questionnaire used at the officers' mess showed that that group of men were not conscious of any diminution of their religious interest. The Bible class of soldiers were all convinced that more and not less men were attending church in the cantonment than ever went at home. The honour rolls of twenty-four churches show that only about half of these men are at all regular in their church attendance and less than one-third of them are church workers. All these facts seem to indicate that the Church is not holding its young men.

I have no means of estimating the number of men that do not happen to have their names on the honour roll of any church, but I have no doubt that it is a goodly proportion of all the men in a camp. They are entirely unchurched, and no church has a feeling of responsibility

for them. They merely increase the total number that have no interest in Christianity.

This lack of interest in the Church was shown in other ways. At one of the cantonments the Y.M.C.A. secretaries thought it would be a good thing to occasionally have a large central service for all the men in camp. A search was made for clergymen whose reputation would assure a large attendance. Preachers could be found who would appeal to the men of a certain locality or to a few men of a particular denomination, but very soon it was discovered that no clergyman was of sufficient prominence to appeal to all the men except the Rev. Billy Sunday. They simply did not exist. There are eloquent preachers in every denomination that can pack the largest city church every time they speak, but they are not packing the church with young men between twenty-one and thirty-one years of age, and that is what the churches have overlooked.

Organised Bible Classes

The effort was made during the first winter of the war to organise Bible classes in every company, battery, or hospital unit in a cantonment. There were eighty of these classes in the camp I was connected with. Every week the

men in charge of the religious work would meet to discuss their problems. One of the constant problems discussed was the organised Bible classes.

They were continually being started and they were continually going to pieces. We worked and prayed and planned, but all to no avail. Army life was blamed, the constant transfer of men from one unit to another added to the difficulty, and the interference of extra military duties, such as going on guard or non-coms' school.

It has only been since I have had the perspective of distance and time that the real reason of this failure has come home to me. Not enough men in the unit were interested in Bible study to make it successful. In a company of a hundred men you could not get one out of ten who would come regularly. This is nothing new. The Sunday schools are all strong in the numbers of little children that attend. Just count the young men between twenty-one and thirty-one that are regular in their attendance and do any Bible study in any one church and you will be shocked. Eliminate the grey-haired men and the boys that do not have to shave, and see how many men are left. Even our men's Bible classes have to call on the old men and boys to help them out.

The Bible class work was discouraging in camp. It was discouraging because we had no primary or beginner's departments to comfort ourselves with. The Church needs to cease comforting herself with paltry excuses and face her problem with men.

No one wants to be charged with being a pessimist, but every one should be willing to face unpleasant facts squarely and learn how to overcome them. We have drifted along during the past years without realising where we were drifting to. The war has come with a shock. The shock will pass away. Is the Church going to lull herself to sleep again with a lot of inane and pious platitudes, or will the Church awaken to her God-given opportunity?

If the Church is to be a vital power in the New Era that is dawning its message has to be more appealing to these young men. The ancient and honourable saints, the old standbys and the occupiers of amen pews are all right in their place. We could not get along without them, but they must prove their sainthood and consecration by modifying customs that have grown sacred through long years of practice so as to make their churches more appealing to the young men. The desires and feelings of the older people should be respected, but the Church should not sacrifice its future

because of this respect. It must win the young men or die of dry rot. Every church or church officer that hampers the minister in tackling this job is hindering God's work on earth and preventing the spread of the true Gospel of Christ. The virile young manhood of our nation must be won for Christ, and energy and effort must be put forth to this end.

We have too long looked on the minister as the comforter of the aged and sick. We need a ministry of leaders to lead men. No minister who recognises the call of the Master wants to ignore the dying or neglect the sick, but a red-blooded man at this time cannot be bound down to a petty round of daily calls and small talk and keep his manhood. A living church will not demand it. The minister whose time is filled with attending the socials of the Ladies' Aid, or gossiping with the Active Workers or any other society, is following in Nero's steps and is fiddling away his time while the world burns.

The ministry should be studying how to make its message meet the needs of the men of the New Era. The laymen should be planning to remake the churches' activities so as to appeal to these men. Both laymen and ministers should recognise the failure of the past and be making new plans for the future.

In the studies that follow we will strive to present some practical solutions for the problem that has been thrust on the Church. These conclusions may seem radical. The problem is so vital that it cannot be met with halfway measures.

I have just read in one of the Church papers (*The Continent*, November 28, 1918), of a town of ten thousand inhabitants in which every pulpit is vacant, and they do not want to call a single minister. They think that the Y.M.C.A. and the Red Cross give them all the religion they need. This is just the condition we can expect at home in many more places unless the Church awakens and puts off her old habits and adapts herself to the conditions of the New Era.

III

THE WEAKNESS OF THE DENOMINATIONAL APPEAL

THE religious work in the Army showed clearly how little interest the men of our country have in any form of denominationalism. In the cantonments during the first year of the war the various denominations held their own church services either in a Y.M.C.A. building or in some well-located place.

At one of the cantonments on a clear Sunday morning in the winter, when there were no outdoor sports to draw the men away, the congregations at three Protestant church services were counted: at one there were twenty-three soldiers present; at another, thirty-five; and at the third, seventy-five. At that time there were about twenty thousand men in camp. To get a true idea of the percentage of the men interested in these services we must remember that possibly half the whole number were Catholics and about fifty per cent. away on leave or on duty. Probably the three churches represented by the services we are considering did not have over two-fifths of the total Protestants in their

Communions. After due consideration has been given to all these facts we find that only one hundred and thirty-two men out of nearly two thousand with nothing else to do cared enough for their own Church to attend its service. This number was not exceptional. A constant oversight of these services for three months proved it to be the average. This means that less than nine per cent. of these church men, who were otherwise idle on Sunday morning, attended their own denominational services.

This was true in spite of the fact that one denomination had three pastors in the camp, another had two, and the third had one. These camp pastors were earnest workers and constantly visited the soldiers in the barracks. They emphasised the appeal of their own Church and did it in a broad way that did not antagonise the men. The smallness of their congregations cannot be accounted for by their unpopularity or negligence. Probably the most popular one of them had the smallest congregation. The real difficulty was the soldiers' lack of interest in the denominational appeal.

The regimental and Y.M.C.A. services showed a marked difference in attendance and emphasised the men's indifference to denominationalism. The regimental services were conducted by the chaplain and held in the

Y.M.C.A. Huts. The attendance here depended largely on the popularity and ability of the chaplain. As they were regimental services they were not denominational in any sense of the word, and it would not be just to claim that all men present were Protestants just because the chaplain happened to be a Protestant. Probably a large majority of those attending the services of a Protestant chaplain were Protestants, as it was possible for all the Catholics to attend Mass in a nearby building. I attended one service where the chaplain had the Band lead the singing and one of the soldiers recited the Ninety-first Psalm. He had a congregation of about four hundred men by actual count. That was an unusually large attendance and some exceptional circumstances accounted for its size. After eliminating the Catholics who could attend Mass if they so desired, and giving due regard to the number either on duty or away from camp, it is fair to estimate that between thirty and fifty per cent. of the Protestants attended these services. Such things as loyalty to the regiment or personal friendship for the chaplain might account for some difference of attendance at these services, but it would hardly account for so great a difference.

The Y.M.C.A. services give us another illustration of the same thing. Many clergymen that

visited the camps to preach for the Y.M.C.A. were disappointed by the number of men at their meetings. It is perfectly true that they did not have crowded buildings. Every one regretted that more men did not come and everything was done to increase the attendance. The visiting clergymen were apt to forget that the area of each building was limited. In a camp of twenty thousand soldiers the average building would only have about two thousand or at the very most about twenty-five hundred men in its area. When we balance these figures and subtract the Catholics, and those on duty or on leave, we find the building had only about five or at the most six hundred men to draw from. The average attendance at these services was between one and two hundred. This is an attendance of between twenty and forty per cent. of the available men. This is very different from the nine per cent. that attended the church services of the various denominations.

This analysis of the congregations at the services in this cantonment shows that three to five times as many men attended the undenominational services as attended the church services. This difference was constant. Any variation could be easily explained by some peculiar circumstances. The men were inter-

ested in Christianity, but they were indifferent to all forms of denominationalism.

If this study was all we had to base an opinion on, it might be said that it covered too narrow a field and was based on mere estimates. Those limitations are readily admitted.

But the same condition existed in at least one other cantonment that I know about. The Director of the Religious Work of the Y.M.C.A. has spent more than a year in this one camp, and during that time he has had the closest possible touch with the religious life of the men.

In this cantonment they took a religious census of the soldiers. This census showed that one Protestant Church had twenty-two hundred and fifty-three men in camp. The denominational pastor of this Church decided that it would be a good thing to get all these men together for a great denominational rally. At first he wanted to hold it in the Auditorium. Later he decided that the Y.M.C.A. Auditorium, which seated twenty-eight hundred men, might be too large and he determined to hold the rally in the Y.M.C.A. building with the privilege of taking the men into the Auditorium if they came in sufficient numbers to warrant the use of such a large room. The rally was advertised in all the barracks and a notice was

given either at Retreat or at the different messes. His best efforts only succeeded in gathering together a group of seventeen soldiers out of the twenty-two hundred and fifty-three men that claimed connection with that Church.

In this cantonment there was a very prominent and popular minister acting as camp pastor for another denomination which had twenty-six hundred and seventy-five men in camp. He was assisted by an active worker representing the men's organisation of his Church. This camp pastor had his Sunday morning denominational service and right after it he gave a free breakfast to all the men who cared to stay. A free breakfast is a very attractive item to soldiers who get tired of the mess hall and its surroundings, even if the food is always good and plentiful. Yet this service, with all that was done to make it attractive, only had an average attendance of less than thirty.

One Sunday a careful estimate was made of the men that attended the various services in this camp. It was found that one hundred and seventeen attended the three denominational Protestant church services while over five thousand men attended the nineteen undenominational Y.M.C.A. services.

These observations coming from two widely

separated cantonments and made by ministers of different Communion are so significant that they ought to command serious consideration.

If the men's interest had been primarily in their Church this difference could not have existed. If their interest had been sectarian they would have gone to the church they believed in. The great majority of those interested in Christianity showed their indifference to church lines and theological schools by attending the undenominational services.

The same indifference to church forms and customs is shown by the men's use of the sacraments and prayer.

One man was baptised by a Methodist minister using the Luthern form of baptism with two Baptists as witnesses and the service was performed in a Presbyterian elder's room—an absolute irregular proceeding, but no one of the participants doubted its efficiency.

Another time a Presbyterian minister was called from his room to pray with a Catholic man for his wife and the little child they were expecting. He explained that he believed in prayer and so sought the help of the only praying man that he could find.

These incidents multiplied without number. Every Y.M.C.A. worker had them. The men did not care for theological hair-splitting. They

came to the secretaries for spiritual help, and the secretaries gave it without regard to church rules or customs. The result of this kind of spiritual interest on the part of the men showed its effects in the religious life of the Y.M.C.A. secretaries.

These secretaries were members of different Churches. They came into the army work with their own denominational point of view. Most of them quickly realised how little denominational interest the soldier had. The work was interdenominational because it was the Y.M.C.A. It was undenominational because that was the only kind of religion that appealed to the men. Many a man went to the camp to teach the soldiers the fundamentals of his own faith. The influence of the soldiers reacted on the teacher and showed him that real Christianity is very different from church definitions and practices.

The Y.M.C.A. services appealed to the men because they presented Christ without a denominational label. The speakers were almost always clergymen. Laymen were only used to fill an emergency. These ministers preached the Gospel, and they usually preached it with power, but they left their church tags at home. The listener could not tell if they were Presbyterians or Episcopalians, Baptists or Methodists.

They were men of God with a message from Jesus Christ.

This was what the men wanted and this is what they sought.

This truth was illustrated in many ways and this is a lesson the Church must learn. The men do not care if the Church has Bishops or Presbyters, or if it uses or does not use a prayer book. They do not care if the Church has Thirty-nine or Forty-two Articles, if it uses a Shorter Catechism, or a Heidelberg Confession. They do not care if infants are baptised or only adults, and they have no interest in the form of baptism, it may be by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The polity and theological foundations are of no interest to them. They no more want to study this machinery of the Church's spiritual life than they want to study the works of their watch. What they desire is something that will tell the time correctly and will stand rough usage. They may never open their watch case. The face of the watch and the hands are the things that interest them. So it is with the Church. They want something that tells the correct time spiritually and does not get out of order too easily. They take the machinery for granted. Theologians have spent too much time in the past tinkering with the wheels and have forgotten that the

function of the Church was to tell the time correctly.

The Church must have its machinery to be a Church, but it must be kept in the background where it belongs. There has been plenty of talk about Church Federation and Church Unity. The one practical Federation of the Church has been the spiritual power in the Army and Navy. This was the strength and stronghold of the Y.M.C.A. The men have seen it work there, and they will want it at home. Narrow sectarianism will repel and alienate them.

It is fully recognised that there are great sections of our country where the denominational appeal is still strong. The Churches use the old shibboleths to rally their people. The denominations hold to hard-and-fast lines and there is little or no fellowship between them. The people of such sections should realise the following facts:

Firstly, Church federation and fellowship is a reasonable thing to expect. Even Christ, when John came and told Him of the man who was casting out devils but did not follow with the disciples, said to him, "He that is not against us is on our part." The Master was more liberal than His beloved disciple, and John was more liberal than some of the generations that have

followed him. The careful student of the New Testament realises that Peter, James, and Paul had different points of view and different lines of approach in dealing with the great spiritual questions concerning Christ. His Work and His Church. These differences were merely differences of opinion and did not prevent the apostles recognising the true worth of those who approached the Master in a different way than they did. The differences of our present denominations are an outgrowth of these different points of view that even existed amongst the apostles. There has been an accumulation of the things on which they differed through the passing centuries. In some cases these differences have been built into a veritable wall around a Church, separating it from fellowship with all other denominations and making for it a hard shell in which it lives alone. If we only realised that the nearer the Church gets to Christ the nearer she gets to all other Churches, then they would all come together. This means that we would remove the things that have accumulated by the passing of time and come back to the spiritual faith that was revealed by our Saviour.

Secondly, this Church federation and fellowship is practicable. The denominations are already working on these lines in the Foreign

Mission field where the Churches have been brought face to face with the great problems of paganism. They have realised that their differences are only differences of opinion. They are all seeking to be loyal to the Master and they are trying to make plain His truth to those who know Him not. The size of their problem draws them closer together and they are dividing the territory, arranging for Union Denominational institutions, and coöperating in many vital ways. Cannot the Church at home show the same spirit of breadth and consecration that the Mission Church is showing? Cannot the Church that lives on the theology realise that she existed before her theology was written?

The real difference between the Churches is not theological but psychological. This is the opinion of many trained minds as the following illustration shows.

Some years ago Professor Giddings had the same group of students for two years in his sociological seminar at Columbia University. They were all graduates of recognised colleges, and in their second year they had received a good deal of training in analysing different sociological groups. One day Professor Giddings handed out sheets of paper and told the class to indicate, by the use of symbols they were familiar with, the type of mind they con-

sidered to predominate in the Churches he mentioned. There was no time for consultation or discussion. The symbols were familiar to all, as they had been used in a number of previous studies. They signified the different types of character, and ran from predominatingly intellectual, through partially intellectual and somewhat emotional, to the entirely emotional nature. He then rapidly mentioned one after the other all the different Churches and religious sects that are familiar to educated men in the United States. The interesting thing was the result of this test. Allowing for a slight variation due to the personal equation the conclusions were the same. Every one of the students in this class recognised that the different Churches and religious sects in this country contained a definite psychological group.

This study simply showed that these trained men all thought that the different Churches appealed to specific types of mind. An experience of nearly twenty years in the pastorate has convinced me that the result of this sociological experiment was correct. Sometimes the psychological element is obscure, as there is a minority of the different types of character in every Church. But the main fact stands out clearly, people as well as birds of a feather flock together.

The time has come for the Churches to recognise that their fundamental difference is psychological and not theological.

In many places a man ignores the theology of a Church before he joins it. He realises that all Churches preach Christ and show the way to God. They all gather under the symbol of the Cross and exalt the duty of caring for the weak and afflicted. They have different forms and customs, but their object is just the same. People today unite with the Church that appeals to them. There is a type of mind that finds its highest expression in a liturgical service. It would naturally affiliate itself with the Episcopalian Church. There are intellectual people who want dignity or worship with instruction and inspiration from the pulpit, they become Congregationalists or Presbyterians. There are warm-hearted people who can find no help in liturgies and complain of the coldness of an intellectual service, they become Methodists.

These Churches show most clearly what is meant by the psychological appeal of the different denominations. The same thing is true of the other Churches. In some cases it is not so evident, but careful study will convince most students that each Church makes its appeal to a man's temperament rather than to his theology. If the Church had to depend on the theological

interests of the average American citizen it would trust to a broken reed, as they have not enough theology in nine out of ten cases to be defined.

If the Churches could only recognise this fact it would be a long step towards a sympathetic relationship and a unity of appeal that the men of the nation long for.

There is no use in trying to convince the world that any one Church has a corner on the truth of the Bible. Every Church possesses scholars of ability and apologists of power. They can defend their own point of view with arguments without end and many apt quotations from the Scriptures. Admit that all have the right foundation and are doing God's work on earth according to their own temperament, and the need of argument ceases. Men who have become accustomed to an undenominational form of Christianity like it. They are going to demand the same kind of Christianity in the New Era. What will the Churches do about it? If they do nothing they will lose the sympathy of the men of the nation. It can be done, and these men know it. There is a danger that men will begin to doubt the sincerity of the Church's desire for federation and if they lose faith in the Church's sincerity in such an important matter they will refuse to accept her as their

spiritual guide in other things. The Church will lose her grip on men just when it is most needed.

The weakness of all efforts to establish a true Federation of the Protestant Churches has been found in the ecclesiastical interests of the different denominations. The machinery of every Church is in the hands of strong men who have great loyalty to their own organisation and sometimes mistake the success of their Church for the coming of Christ's Kingdom. Anything that limits their activities or reduces the number of their own churches seems harmful. They are always ready to talk federation. Most of them believe in it. They are only troubled by having no practical plan for working it out and at the same time conserving their own ecclesiastical organisation. They are all so busy with their own duties that none of them have time to work out the necessary details. The time has come when these details must be worked out and something done, or the cause of Christ in this country will suffer irreparable harm. The men of our country are in an earnest, receptive mood. They would co-operate in this work with great heartiness. They will not respond to exhortations to help support a Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Episcopalian church in a small town which

has a population only large enough to make one fair-sized congregation. They will want one and only one Church.

Two concrete illustrations will show how the ecclesiastical organisation sometimes causes a multiplicity of churches in a small community.

In one small town there are two churches about a block apart. One is a Methodist church and one a Presbyterian. Recently the Presbyterian Church called a graduate of a Methodist seminary as pastor. The Presbytery installed this man trained by the Methodist Church and at his request invited a professor of the Methodist seminary to give him the charge. Now there are two churches, one bearing the Methodist and the other the Presbyterian label, both presided over by ministers educated in the same seminary and both trying to appeal to the same people. If these two churches combined they could dominate that whole community. They have enough people and wealth to make one strong organisation. Instead of that they are keeping up the denominational appeal, and that is the one thing that the men of our country as represented in the Army do not want.

Nothing was done by either the Methodist Conference or the Presbytery to bring these churches together. Individuals in both denomi-

nations realised the absurdity of the situation, but there was no ecclesiastical machinery that met this need. Has not the time come to consider the creation of some inter-Church commission or board that can act in such a case? There are strong men in all denominations that realise the absurdity of multiplying churches in sparsely settled communities. Is there no way that these men can get together and develop a spirit of broad ecclesiastical statesmanship instead of the old spirit of denominational rivalry?

The following incident shows even more clearly the guilt of ecclesiastical organisations in multiplying churches:

There were two weak, struggling churches in a village community. A young man of broad sympathy and spiritual vision became pastor of one of these churches. The other was without a pastor. Being the only minister in the village, he arranged to supply both pulpits by preaching on alternate Sundays in the different churches. He was active and zealous. He built up a real civic and community interest. In time the churches came to the point where most of the people wanted one church. They had gone so far as to show which denomination they favoured. Immediately the denomination that

would lose a church stepped in and by its ecclesiastical authority prevented the union. They did not want their ecclesiastical records to show the loss of a church. This shows that in this case the fault lay with an ecclesiastical organisation.

The name of this denomination has been intentionally omitted. It is not the only sinner and it should not be specified. All that is intended here is to show by concrete illustrations where the root of this fault lies. No one desires to hurt any particular denomination. They have all done good work in the past. They are now an outgrown relic of a former age. They should recognise that they are not an end in themselves but a means to an end—the development of Christian character in individuals and the building up of Christ's Kingdom in the community. Anything, even to the loss of their own identity, that can accomplish these purposes should be done without question.

This problem of Church federation also demands an increased spirit of consecration on the part of church members. It would be necessary to give up some buildings hallowed by many sacred associations. It would require, in some cases, the use of new forms of worship. The end in view is worthy of these sacrifices.

It is possible at different services to appeal to people of different temperaments. It is possible to have a dignified, liturgical, or intellectual service on Sunday morning and a warm-hearted, simple service at night. If we only recognise that the difference between the Churches is psychological and not theological, a plan could be worked out that would appeal to a big majority of the people. We cannot hope to eliminate all differences of opinion this side of eternity. Single Churches that appeal to people of different temperament can be developed.

The New Era is upon us, and as we face its opportunity we have to realise that the old shibboleths and denominational appeals do not hold our men. This is a real problem. The Church can reach and hold far more men by eliminating denominational rivalries than in any other way. This allows the Church to make one appeal to all men. It makes the local church strong enough to dominate its field and carry on a social and community work that will hold these men. The practical difficulties are many but the importance of the object sought justifies drastic measures. All denominations should be co-operating in this work, and they ought to do it now.

The Golden Moment of the age has come. Let the Church lay aside every weight of prejudice and the sin of selfishness and run with patience this race that is before her, and great shall be the glory that is given to the founder of the Church and Saviour of Mankind.

IV

THE NEED OF A PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

A STUDY of the religious work of the Y.M.C.A. in our national cantonments showed that its strength was in the practical common sense form of Christianity that it preached and practised. It did not limit itself to preaching. It really lived for others. It showed the spirit of Christ in daily acts of kindly service. The secretaries were always obliging and considerate. They were always on their job. They realised that a man needed to laugh just as much as he needed to pray. They furnished amusement and recreation as well as religion and good advice. They gave out boxing gloves and footballs as well as Bibles and testaments. They remembered that a man had a virile body and active mind as well as a needy soul.

In one of the cantonments the Director of the Social Work had been an evangelist before he took up the army work. It was his duty to provide wholesome entertainments for the soldiers. He discovered that Sunday night was an

off time for the men in camp. Those who wanted to go to a religious service went to the Y.M.C.A. meetings. Hundreds would not go near any kind of a service. They loafed around the barracks or wandered around camp looking for something to do. This secretary decided that something ought to be done for these men, and so he started what he called a Popular Sunday Evening in the Auditorium. This name was suggestive of many things, but as it really meant nothing it gave a good deal of latitude as to the programme. It was not a religious service, although when he could get the right speaker a brief interesting talk was given and sometimes a prayer was offered. Sometimes it was an evening of good music, at other times he used a good educational motion picture. The programme depended on what was the most appropriate thing that he could get that night. Once when he was disappointed in his programme he ran in a Mutt and Jeff picture.

One of his evangelistic friends heard what he was doing, and took him to task for it. "My good brother," answered the secretary, "don't find fault with me until you have lived in camp at least a month and have studied the needs of these men."

He had discovered that old methods of work

were inadequate for the task before him and that his old prejudices had to be sacrificed. His interest in the moral and spiritual life of the soldiers made him enlarge his own ideas as to what was fitting for Sunday evening.

The experience of this secretary was not exceptional. It merely illustrates what happened to most of the Y.M.C.A. army secretaries. They found out that simple preaching was not enough. Christianity to be effective in camp had to give more consideration to man's desire for social life and amusement than it ever gave in the ordinary parish. Even Sunday evening had to be used constructively to meet this need.

The evangelist did not give up his convictions on his old work. The changed conditions simply made him use other means to reach men and help them. If he could not get the men into a preaching service he realised it was better to get them into a good atmosphere and make them think of wholesome things than to leave them to the demoralising pastimes that many practised. Good music, educational pictures, and even Mutt and Jeff were better than poker and craps.

Here is where the Church has sometimes failed. While the Y.M.C.A. tried to care for the whole life of the soldier the Church has expected the home, club, or lodge to furnish

the social life and recreation men craved while it took care of all spiritual matters. Many men have been so entirely absorbed in their social and physical needs that they have ignored their souls. If the Church had had a common meeting-ground with these men it would have been in touch with them when they needed spiritual help. It could have spoken the right word in season. The men have learnt to think of a Christianity that is sympathetic and kindly, free from dictatorial advice but always on the job. The kind of Christianity that hands out writing paper with a smile, answers foolish questions with patience, and is always willing to run an errand for a friend. This work requires more personality and equipment but fewer churches. It is the kind of Christianity that is needed to meet the needs of the New Era.

It requires comfortable rooms furnished with magazines and games. It means having a player piano or a victrola with a good assortment of popular records. The records must be kept up to date and must constantly pass from Mr. Zip to Katie and never pine for Wagner and Bach. The men ought to feel at home, and that means smoking should be permitted, for the man that smokes does not feel at home unless he can have his pipe or his cigarette.

This kind of work will not run itself. You cannot run it by rule of thumb or by any other superimposed rules. It needs the constant personal attention of a man who lives with it. His main job is to be a friend to all the men in town. His object is the creating of friendships that give a foundation for words of advice and spiritual counsel when the occasion arises.

There cannot be three or four social centres in one small town. The necessary equipment costs money. Personality must be given to it by adequate oversight. Two ministers preaching different conceptions of the Gospel each Sunday, only hinder each other. One Church and one minister with a consecrated assistant and an adequately equipped building would make an ideal organisation for meeting the religious problems of the New Era. This kind of an organisation can be developed in every village community, if the followers of Christ will only get near enough to Him to forget their denominational prejudices and strive to conduct His Church so as to help the most people possible.

The Church cannot afford to eliminate from the field of her activities the economic life of men, as the greater part of a man's time is spent in earning his living. The conditions under which he labours and the amount he earns affect

his mind and soul. True religion cannot ignore these questions. This brings the Church face to face with the conflict between labour and capital.

Almost every congregation has in it representatives of both these classes. They worship together on Sunday and go their separate ways on Monday. They are constantly quarrelling, and the Church looks the other way while they fight it out. The unions are so absorbed in their own struggle that their leaders sometimes lose all sense of patriotism and duty. During the war a company engaged in essential war work was informed by the National Government that they were not turning out their product fast enough to meet the needs of the Army in France, and the Government requested permission to send a couple of representatives to explain the situation to the men. The company accepted the Government's offer and told its employees that they could attend this meeting during their work hours and the company would pay them for their time. The representatives of the Government came and gave a plain statement of what the Army needed and urged the men to do their best to speed up production. The men were red blooded American citizens and they responded nobly. A few days later at a meet-

ing of the union held behind closed doors, one of the union's officials warned the men against the Government's effort to speed up production and told them that if they did it they would be traitors to the union. This kind of talk, which was used while we had two million men in France and a constantly growing casualty list which showed that thousands of men had suffered or died for their country, was not only treason against the Government but it was a cowardly attack on the men who were fighting our battle. It may be said, in exoneration of this official of the union, that capital in the past had not treated its employees fairly and had used their loyalty and patriotism for its own ends. Such exoneration does not exonerate. This leader was blinded by his own prejudice and carried away by his own conception of what the members of the union should do. He never realised the injury that he was doing to our men in France or to the cause of labour. Fortunately he only represents one class of labour leaders, as there are many whose loyalty is above all doubt; but this incident illustrates how deep the chasm has become between capital and labour. It shows the need of some drastic action. Both parties believe in property rights and both parties believe in industry. Here is a field for church work. During recent

years some clear-headed men like Charles Stetzle have seen this problem and have urged the Church to take it up. Some denominations are playing with it. No Church that I know of is working at it. The Churches have their societies to advocate temperance and to safeguard the Sabbath. They are active and doing a splendid work. The Church needs another society with the courage of Christ to face this problem and bring together these diverse interests, both of which are represented in the Church.

The foundation of this antagonism is found in past abuses and grievances. The bitterness of the present is due to mutual misunderstandings and a general lack of confidence. If the Church is a fearless friend of both sides and simply seeks justice for all, in time she may be able to do much towards bringing them together. There must be some just way of protecting the interests of both the employer and employee. This *modus vivendi* should be earnestly sought for, and when found it ought to be advocated by the Church. This is bringing our religion into the daily life of business in a practical way, and it is the kind of question we must expect to deal with in the days of the New Era.

Our problems in the past have been those

problems that grew out of an effort to develop personal morality. The problems of the Church in the future will be the problems that grow out of an effort to develop in men and society a social conscience. We are our brother's keeper, and God will accept no excuse for the neglect or evasion of this moral obligation to the weak or poor. Christianity is not merely a Sabbath Day's devotions, it is also a system of personal and social ethics that should control the activities and business of every other day in the week.

This effort to make our religion a real power in our daily life leads us into other difficult questions. Christianity is a philosophy of social life as well as a gospel of personal salvation. The whole foundation of modern civilisation has been challenged by the rise of Bolshevism.

This party has shown its destructive power in Russia, and there is a possibility that it may spread through the countries of Europe and even cross the Atlantic. Bolshevism is a practical application of the doctrine of sabotage. Its exponents believe that organised civilisation is so hopelessly bad that the only thing to do is to destroy it. It is weak in its constructive policy, but strong in its spirit of destruction. It is a demand that the least educated class shall

control all the power of the Government and remake society on its own lines. Its strength lies in the number of people that have suffered from the present organisation of society and the bitterness of their grievances. Where there is a well-organised and just social life it is weak. Where the poor have been trodden under foot by a heedless and selfish autocracy it is strong. The Church should realise that it is her duty to guard society against the excesses of this destructive spirit. It is not enough to preach against it. When the Church opens her doors to the social life of men she must go farther, she must oppose all forms of social injustice. Her belief in order should not blind her eyes to those dark corners of modern economic life where the ignorant are exploited and children are crushed. Such things do exist, and the Church should fearlessly search them out and hold them up to public scorn.

There is a love of fair play and justice in this country that will not permit them to continue after they have been exposed. The Church is not afraid of this task. She is only ignorant. She has been too much out of touch with the conditions under which many people have to work and the way in which some wealth has been created. This task requires accurate knowledge, sound common sense, and great courage.

The best solution for these problems is a real application of Christ's principles to our social and economic life.

The need of this practical application of Christianity to the daily life of mankind is shown in yet another way.

The League of Nations to guarantee peace will be ineffective unless there is a strong moral conscience to support it in the nations that compose the League. Its strength or weakness depends upon the moral character of the individual citizens of these nations. This League depends for its very existence on the sacredness of treaty obligations. These obligations are sometimes antagonistic to national aspirations. A nation must have the moral character that is necessary to make a sacrifice of its own ambitions for its own and the world's larger good.

Recently the world was startled by the almost unbelievable international immorality of Germany. Her own immediate interests seemed to be jeopardised by the treaty that safeguarded the neutrality of Belgium. She immediately called the treaty a "scrap of paper" and ravaged Belgium from one end to the other. This was the result of forty years of the wrong kind of education. She had been training her people in the spirit of Pan-Germanism, which taught that the nation was the final arbiter of morals

and could do no wrong. The people who accepted this conception of national life broke all international laws and gloried in their deeds of shame.

Christianity believes in another sort of education. She believes that all peoples need to be taught the eternal principles of righteousness and justice. These principles do not come from the lips of kings or the decrees of parliaments. They are moral qualities written into the law of the universe by its Creator. They cannot be altered or modified by any human agency. They are obligatory laws that should govern the acts of nations as well as individuals. This education is the only adequate foundation for a League of Nations to enforce peace.

Differences in national interests are bound to arise among the nations that compose the League and they will need the spirit of self-restraint that comes from a sense of moral obligations and a realisation of the need of weighing all acts in the scales of righteousness and justice. It is no longer possible for a nation to isolate itself from the rest of the world. The great Atlantic is leaped by the wireless, and the interests of Europe knock at our doors through their representatives in the West Indies. France, Holland, and England stand at the main entrance of our commercial life in

their colonies that touch the main routes leading to the Panama Canal. We cannot build a Chinese Wall to separate ourselves from the interests of Europe or the welfare of South America. The nations of the world are a great family with diversified interests and different ambitions. The only thing that can bring unity and harmony to all these nations is a belief that righteousness is always righteous and justice should be the final arbiter of all international questions.

The Church is the builder of morals and conscience. This is her unique job. She aims to build up the moral character of our own people at home, and she should strive to develop the conscience of all nations on earth. This is the call of the New Era for an intensified work in our own land and an extension of the Church's influence in its work for foreign missions. Through this mission work of the Church it has established schools and colleges, hospitals and medical schools throughout the whole earth. It has overthrown ignorance and blind prejudices wherever it has gone. It has the confidence of rulers and people in many distant places. By extending and strengthening this work we can develop the consciences of these people and strengthen the foundations of the League of Nations.

We do not want to exploit them for our own advantage. We seek the peace of righteousness and justice, but righteousness and justice can exist only where there is a developed conscience and a high conception of moral obligations. This is a practical work of applying the principles of Christ to both national and international life and interests.

This conception of the Church's sphere of influence affects the kind of preaching that is expected. It requires the ministry to preach Christ and show men how to live. The men of America have just passed through a unique experience. Their interests have been broadened and their minds have been sharpened. Many have been touched by the activities and message of a practical Christianity. They will look for the same sort of thing in the Church of the New Era. Sermons on future punishment will pass by unheeded. They have seen too many men die to be afraid of death.

The selfishness of the appeal "Save Yourself" will repel them. They have gone to another school. They have been taught to sacrifice themselves at the word of command, without a moment's hesitation. They have learned to give themselves to save a friend. They seek a religion that is virile and brave. The Gospel contains this faith. Christ preached it. He

called His disciples to a life of hardship and sacrifice, and they gloried in His call. If we offer them spiritual sugar plums they will refuse them with disdain. They are interested in life and all its problems. They have received a liberal education with their military training. They look to the Church for guidance and help in solving the problems of Christian citizenship.

The practical work we have just been considering gives the minister the necessary inspiration for this type of preaching. These things usually go together. The daily touch with the social and business life of men makes the minister grasp their viewpoint. His Bible study gives him the inspiration and help they need. The old Gospel comes with new emphasis and men come to church because they find there the inspiration they seek.

The Church has been too much occupied in cultivating itself. The main job of the minister has been preaching acceptably to his own congregation and calling on them enough times in a year to keep them satisfied. The time has come to sow the seed of the Kingdom broadcast. The Church through its ministers and laymen must carry the Gospel of Christ into the banks and markets, the stores and factories, the courts and legislatures. Much can be done by preaching, but the preaching should not be limited to

the pulpit. Ministers can arrange to speak in factories and office buildings at the noon hour. Some years ago a noonday meeting was held in a large machine shop. It was held every week during the winter season for a number of years. Finally the men's interest was put to the test. A red-hot political campaign was on. One of the political parties decided to hold a rally just outside of the shop at the hour of this service. Hardly a man attended the political rally and most of them were indignant that any one should interfere with their preacher and his meeting. Some of the men went so far as to say that this service had changed the moral atmosphere of the shop. This work can be multiplied. Doors open on all sides. Christ preached on the street and on the hills of Galilee. His disciples can find a store or factory, street corner or park where the message can be given.

A Christian nation means more than a nation that has some church members within its bounds. A Christian nation means a nation that is permeated, in its business and social life, in its economic customs and legislative acts, with the spirit and purpose of Christ.

The social and economic life of a people can only be permeated by those ideals that are constantly held before them. The Church has only held these ideals up to those who already cared

enough about them to go out of their way and into a special building to hear its message. The great mass of struggling souls surge by the doors of the Church. They need the inspiration of Christ and they need to be reminded of God. The Church can reach them by going after them. The great mass of men will never of their own volition seek for the hidden treasures of the Church.

The Church must take her treasure in her hand and go after men. She must show what she has and what she can do. She must convince the gainsaying and answer foolish questions courteously and with infinite tact. Her ideals must be before the whole nation and her standards must be thoroughly understood. A nation is not a Christian nation until it consciously strives to attain the ideals established by Christ. His standards for personal and social morality must be woven into its custom and practice.

This practical application of the Gospel to the daily life of men was the thing that gave Christ His unique power. He mingled with men so much that His critics called Him the friend of publicans and sinners. No one could honestly call the Church of today a friend of the publican and sinner. The publican is held up to scorn by our pulpits and the sinner is

scorched by fiery denunciations. Christ was the Great Physician. He sought the places where there were plenty of patients to furnish Him with a practice. Many modern ministers are satisfied with a small practice of spiritual neurasthenics that can be comforted with bread pills or a little sugar and water.

We need a new grip. Sin has shown its power in devastating the world. The Church needs the men of all nations. The men of all nations need the Church. Practical Christianity is the thing that appeals to them. This is what Christ preached and practised. The time has come to modify and change some of our Church customs. If we are to meet the religious needs of the coming generation we must start to do this work now.

V

CRYSTALLISING THE RELIGION OF THE INARTICULATE

MUCH was written during the war on the religious life of the soldier. This mass of material shows that many soldiers are deeply religious without appreciating it and that they seldom connect their religious interest with the Church. These two facts are of vital interest to all interested in the future of the Church and its influence in the world.

This does not mean the discovery of a new spiritual experience. Many ministers are familiar with the same state of mind in men connected with their own parishes.

The Church has made the mistake of ignoring this sort of religious interest because it is so vague that it is hard to define and it exists in such unexpected places. Not infrequently it manifests itself in the lives of people who show serious elements of moral weakness. Christ knew the possibilities of this sort of a religious interest, for when the religionists of His day rejected Him, He went to the publicans, the men of shady business reputation, and to the sinner,

who was not considered worthy of any social consideration, and taught them the things of God. He took their inarticulated religious interest as a foundation on which to build His Kingdom on earth because He knew that it was capable of being developed into a vigorous spiritual life.

Life in the trenches and personal contact with men in the cantonments have shown us how widespread this spiritual condition is and what an opportunity it offers to the Church. The dislocation of a man's ordinary routine and the obligations of military training have in many cases revealed the hidden aspirations of souls that do not know how to give voice to their longings. The trials of warfare and the dangers of the battlefield have intensified this religious interest.

The Church must do as Christ did. It must go out into the highways and byways seeking all men who have an inarticulated longing for God. In taking up this work we must not let ourselves be swept away by our emotions or blinded to the true situation.

Soldiers have never before been considered as religious men, and now we have to constantly remind ourselves that every soldier is not a saint. Unfortunately there are some men in

khaki who have no other ambition than the satisfaction of their sensual appetites. These men have all the weaknesses and vices usually found in an army, but with them is a large number who have an indefinite but deeply seated religious longing. This has been created by two things. The causes of this war are fundamentally moral and spiritual. America did not enter it with any selfish purpose or ambition. It was forced upon us by the intrigues and sins of Germany. Men had to fight or sacrifice those things that are highest and noblest in civilisation. International honesty and honour were at stake. This clear-cut issue called forth the best in every soldier. It made him feel the responsibility and nobleness of his service and developed the best in his character.

The other cause of this religious emotion is largely due to the Government's campaign of education. The Government quickly realised that many men were ignorant of the cause of the war, and determined to enlighten them. The officers, and speakers of national prominence, were used to explain just what the war meant and show why this country had to fight. The Y.M.C.A., Red Cross, and other welfare organisations were used in the camps and cantonments for the same purpose. The response of

the men to this campaign of education was remarkable. They were seldom restless or inattentive.

One night a short talk was to be given in a crowded Hut before the movies. The Y.M.C.A. secretary in charge doubted if the men's interest could be held for more than ten minutes. The speaker was so impressed by the men's attention while he was speaking that he continued to talk for twenty-five minutes. When he stopped the men continued to applaud until the speaker came back on the stage and told them that he would give them another talk on the same subject in a couple of days. This is the only instance I ever heard of where the soldiers encoored a speaker on any subject while they were waiting for the movies. They were usually restless and impatient of all delay. It was not the speech that caught the men. It was the subject.

This was the most spectacular manifestation of the men's interest that came to my attention, but it was no exception to the general rule. Whenever these talks were given the men were anxious to hear the facts. Many Y.M.C.A. secretaries have said that it was the only kind of a lecture that held the attention of all the men. It was not unusual to have from one-third to one half of an audience of soldiers get up and

walk out during other lectures. It was rare, indeed, when any men left while talks on the causes and purposes of the war were being given. It was the one thing that they were all interested in.

This campaign of education was carried on primarily to build up the morale of the Army. It also touched a responsive chord in many a man's spiritual nature. These men caught a spiritual vision. They became the crusaders of civilisation. They were willing to fight and die for an ideal. For the first time in their lives self-sacrifice and loyalty to an ideal became a real power. They had to forget themselves and their own ambitions to serve a great cause.

Many of them were not religious at home. They did not consider themselves religious while in the Army. They only caught a vision of what they were fighting for, and they gladly gave this ideal both service and sacrifice. The life they lead and the horrors they faced have touched a new chord in their souls. They responded nobly. There is a real spirituality in risking one's life for a comrade or volunteering in a moment of great danger. Their hearts have been kindled by new thoughts and motives. It is the awakening of their soul. They have new aspirations and new hopes. New responsibilities are recognised and new emotions felt. This

is the spirit that Donald Hankey has called the Religion of the Inarticulate.

Many of them have proven the reality of their spiritual life by the Great Sacrifice. Thousands of them have come home. Will the New Era give them a cold formal Church droning out the rubrics of past ages or will it develop a Church aglow with life and stretching every nerve to meet the future?

The old stereotyped methods will not appeal to them. A message as dry as dust and as lifeless as ashes cannot hold them. Their faith is vague, but it is pulsing with vitality. They want life and help in solving the problems of life. Their whole point of view is coloured and influenced by their recent experience. They have borne the burden of an arduous training for a great cause. They have felt the shock of battle. Their souls bear the mark of their recent experiences just as truly as their bodies. Christianity to appeal to them must not savour of bygone ages. It must tingle with life and have a grip on reality. They want spirituality, but they want a spirituality that will help them live for something real. Unless something definite and practical is done to meet their need they will sink back into selfishness and sin. Their aspirations will grow cold and their morals will deteriorate. Instead of helping the future civil-

isation of America they will be a clog and handicap.

An organised evangelistic effort will not meet this need. There is no doubt but such a movement would win many men for the Church. It would also alienate many others. The number it won could be tabulated and prove its success to those who wanted such a proof. The number it lost could never be calculated this side of eternity. Its fictitious success would do incalculable harm. It would put the new wine of the spirit into the old wine-skins of form and formula and end in the loss of both. There is no sense of using old phrases in new conditions. They do not fit. How can we talk of the need of religious experience to men who have had such an experience but do not know it? We have no desire to disparage evangelistic effort in its right place. It has an important place in the programme of preaching, but this is not the time to use it in the old way. The hour calls for a more fundamental and drastic treatment. It requires an effort to show men the significance of their aspirations and to crystallise their spiritual life in the Kingdom of God.

An effort to capitalise the generosity of the Church created by the experiences of the past years would undoubtedly bring in large sums of money, but such an effort fails to realise the

real need. The Church's strength is not in its financial resources but in its spiritual life. The opportunity of the New Era calls for a new appreciation and application of spiritual truth. The Church has never before had to face a problem like it. It must conserve the truth of the past and discard its husks.

Here is a problem to tax the keenest theological student and the most wide-awake pastor. Its difficulty is only equalled by its importance. Its solution will require consecrated intellect and broad sympathy. The Gospel of Christ when rightly interpreted has the answer to this need, but it must receive a new and vital interpretation. A revolution as great as the Protestant Reformation is needed to meet this need. The men who know what real sin is will scoff at the Church or turn away sorrowfully if she insists on branding as sin such things as smoking and moving pictures.

One of the most imperative needs of the New Era in this connection is to have the ministers of America rise above the ministerial type of mind. They have to deal with men and men's problems, with questions of business readjustment and social sins. The study and ministerial meetings are at best but a poor preparation for grappling with these problems. While still keeping up his studies and not neglecting to

meet with other ministers for social intercourse and inspiration, he must mingle more with men and gain a first-hand knowledge of the things that they are thinking about and dealing with.

One young minister some years ago tried to meet this need by taking lunch one day a week at the club where most of his men lunched. The men of his parish knew that the pastor would be at the club from twelve to two on Thursdays. Some would drop in for a hurried bite and short chat. Others, when they had the time, stayed longer. Business, politics, civics, reform movements, and athletics were all discussed at different times. This scheme worked well in this parish, as it met the local needs and conditions.

Other ministers play golf, or indulge in other outdoor sports with their men. It does not matter how it is done as long as the minister gets to know his men as a man and not as a minister. He will be surprised at the number of men he finds that want to help make this a better and purer world. When they get to know their minister as a man they overcome their shyness and show their real selves. At first he is the "minister," and must be treated with so much respect and consideration that the minister finds it hard to know what men are thinking about. The interest of the men of America cannot be awakened in trivialities, but they readily respond to

big issues. The ministers must think deeply and act wisely to avail themselves of this opportunity for the New Era.

Donald Hankey shows the heart of the problem when he says, "Here were men who believed absolutely in the Christian virtues of unselfishness, generosity, charity, and humility, without ever connecting them in their minds with Christ; and at the same time what they did associate with Christianity was just on a par with the formalism and smug self-righteousness which Christ spent His whole life in trying to destroy."

The problem and the opportunity of the Church lies right here. Unconsciously it has drifted away from the simplicity of Christ. It has used its creeds and theology as sacred symbols that must be safeguarded and protected instead of expressions of faith that help and strengthen men.

In too many cases the Bible has become a storehouse of texts for the minister instead of the inspirer of life. Professor L. P. Jacks in one of his stimulating and illuminating stories makes his hero, Snarley Bob, the spiritual man outside of the Church, say when he is asked about the Bible, "Well, that's a good old book, but there's some things in it that's no good to anybody—except to talkin' men."

And that is the way it has been used. We

realise this when we hear the twisted utterances of the pulpit. Many sermons on the Pillars of the Temple, the Sea of Glass, or the Flying Horsemen are merely brilliant rhetoric and prose poetry. They only appeal to the intellectual side of a man. They have no practical meaning or message. The saints sometimes enjoy them. The sinners only sneer at their superficiality. Snarley Bob was right. There is much in the Bible only good for talking men, and these things have been too much in evidence. The Good Old Book contains another message, it is the word of Christ,—“Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Here is the Church’s problem and opportunity. It is not with the soldiers, it is with herself. It is to learn and practise the religion of God’s love shown in deeds of loving-kindness and self-sacrifice instead of elaborating her ritual or theology. It is to create its organisation and life so as to reach the sinner who has an inarticulated spiritual longing rather than to coddle saints who have too much religion in their heads and not enough in their daily life. There has been too much formalism in the Church, too much emphasis on doctrines and dogmas, too much exaltation of rituals and rites and too

little realisation of the practical problems that busy men face. It is true that the student and theologian may see in these things their theoretical significance and importance. The man on the street has neither the ability nor the inclination to study them.

While the Church has been busy talking about the theory of its doctrines she has neglected the spiritual life of many outside of the fold. There is so much true Christianity outside of the Church that the Church should realise that she is at fault. The time has come for a real spiritual revival in the Church. This is not a new Gospel. It is a reëmphasis of Christ's message enlarged by two thousand years of experience and by the needs of the present hour. Christ came not to teach theology or to preach dogma. He had definite and clear-cut religious beliefs. He interpreted them by living for others. He taught the love of God by loving men. When John the Baptist was troubled and in prison he sent his disciples to ask Christ for some proof of His Messiahship. Christ answered by telling the disciples to go back and tell John about His life and work. This is the final proof of Christianity. It is easy to preach of self sacrifice, but it is hard to practise it. The Church has preached. This means that we will have less eloquence in the pulpit but more in the street. This is a simpler gospel

and one that the labouring-man can understand. It means that church officers will not testify alone by passing the plate in broadcloth on Sunday morning or in the quiet retirement of the prayer meeting, but they will testify by deeds of loving-mercy on the street and in just and righteous treatment of their employees in the factory and the store. A Christian man is not a sour-faced, sanctimonious old hypocrite, as the caricaturists would have us think. He is the clear-eyed lover of God who lives for God by living for men. This is the kind of character all men honour.

This conception of Christianity requires a simpler form of preaching, less elaborate services, and a new emphasis on neglected truths. This is not a new interpretation of Christianity, it is so old that it comes with startling newness. It is as old as the Gospel itself. It requires the rewriting of much that we hold sacred. It means that meekness, loving-kindness, self-sacrificing service, and thoughtfulness for others are the cardinal principles that show our love of God. It means a broadening of the Church to limits of Christ's love.

Woe unto us and our children if we fail to learn this lesson! woe unto America and the world if we fail to solve this problem!



PART II
THE FUTURE: ITS HOPE AND
PROMISE



VI

THE RETURN OF FAITH

THE study we have been making of the Church and its past failures has been an unpleasant experience. No Christian likes to see the weaknesses or failings of the Church pointed out. But this investigation is necessary if we are to understand how to emphasise the Gospel so as to reach the men of the New Era. Temporarily we may find ourselves in the same despondent state of mind illustrated by Matthew Arnold in his poem "Dover Beach" where he says—

"The Sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world."

But we do not intend to remain on "Dover Beach" listening to the night wind and retreat-

ing tide. We are going forth to meet the sunrise of a new day, when the tide has turned and is once more rolling in with each wave flashing in the sunlight and each ripple singing a song of joy.

We have to pass through the night and feel its mystery and sadness to learn how to appreciate and use the daylight. We have to hear the sob of the receding tide and see the desolation of the mud-flats to appreciate the sparkling waves of the flood tide so as to use to the full the glory and strength of a renewed faith.

To appreciate the position we are in we ought to remind ourselves that a great mental or spiritual shock has a paralysing effect. It seems to numb both mind and soul. Christ's death was such a shock to His disciples. They had looked upon him as the hope of Israel. All their love of country and religious enthusiasm had been centred upon Him as an earthly king—the son of David—the long-looked-for redeemer of His race. Their faith had been faith in an earthly king and kingdom. Christ's betrayal and rejection destroyed all hope of this attainment, and we are not surprised to read that “they all forsook him and fled.” This tragic shock only momentarily destroyed their faith.

We are not surprised to read that these earn-

est men and women were gathered in a little group at the Cross watching the awful tragedy there enacted. Their love and loyalty had survived the issue, and there at the Cross they were laying a new foundation for a new faith. The old hope of an earthly king and kingdom was gone and gone forever, but they were at the beginning of a faith in a heavenly kingdom and a spiritual Saviour. For a moment the blow that fell upon them must have seemed to have killing weight. Their minds and their souls shrank when they thought of the morrow. Everything was gone, but it was only gone to return in a better way.

Such shocks come not only to groups of people, but they also come to individuals. Alfred Tennyson, when a young man, had his faith numbed by the death of his friend Arthur Hallam. We can read the whole story of his mental and spiritual agony in "*In Memoriam*." He did not write this poem for publication but to find relief for his pent-up emotions. He starts with—

"Thou madest man he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die."

The whole meaning of life is here uncertain. He cannot feel that death is the goal of God's purpose, but he does not know what that pur-

pose is. We see his soul pass through doubt and uncertainty during the following years. Grief reigns supreme. Finally he comes out into the light and he closes with—

“One God, one law, one element
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.”

Here faith has returned, and he has found God's purpose in his act of creation. He began with a faith in his friend and in a life of friendship. He ends with faith in God and His purpose. It is no longer a thing of immediate attainment. It is a “far-off divine event” and it controls “the whole creation.”

We have seen others walk through the valley of the shadow of death with bleeding hearts and numb faith. We have seen their earthly hopes crushed and their lives wrecked by this dark shadow. They have finally climbed to the mountain tops and their faces have been illumined by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness and we have heard them sing the Psalm of Eternal Life: “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Out of their pain and despair they have come to a better faith and through their darkness they have found light.

Recently many devout Christians have had their faith suffer from a paralysing shock.

For a generation the pulpits of the Church have echoed to the Gospel of Christ's kingdom on earth. Heaven has seemed very far off and the needs of the men about us have seemed very near. The Church has had faith in the spiritual power of God to overcome principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places. This was no small faith. It sent lonely men and frail women forth in the busy marts of life to battle valiantly with entrenched evils. It brought home to the heart and conscience of Christianity its obligation to the poor and the oppressed. It raised womanhood and safeguarded childhood. It taught the brotherhood of man and our obligation for the public weal. It was a great faith for this earth, but it had its limitations. It made us accept peace as a son's portion. We believed that war was a relic of barbarism and a practice of the Dark Ages. Its brutality and cruelty seemed very distant from our well-organised and peaceful lives. Even during the first two and a half years of the Great War it was so far removed from us that we hardly realised what it meant. We rejoiced in a President who had kept us out of the war, and we were too proud to fight.

Then came the great shock. We were in the war and our men were facing its perils and our

hearts felt its burden. The shock was so great that many found their faith numb and their souls wracked with doubt.

The year of preparation and the severe struggle from July 18th until November 11th, 1918, did not give us time to absorb the shock that we had suffered. Instead of a bitter winter of hunger and anxiety we had two howling saturnalia of victory in November. We so rejoiced in our victory that our groping faith stumbled and fell. It made one or two feeble efforts to rise and go forward and then with a shrug of its hypothetical shoulders it lay down and went to sleep.

The experience of the disciples at the rejection of Christ and of individuals who have passed through the valley of the shadow of death indicate for us how our faith can return. It has been resting from its shock and it needs to be shaken into new life and purpose.

These dark moments in the lives of men and nations are often due to man's sin. No word we can utter can take away the enormity of the act of treachery that caused Christ's death. The Jews who rejected Him and killed Him were brutal murderers sacrificing an innocent man for what they thought was the well-being of their personal aims and their national greatness. It was a destructive moment in a constructive

process. It does not matter how constructive the process may be, the destructive moment is always painful and harassing. It was God using man's sin to bring home to man a larger spiritual truth than He had yet been able to learn. The sin of the Jews taught us to know the atonement of Christ, and this was worth all the pain the disciples had to suffer.

We, too, have suffered because of sin. Our sin has been the love of pleasure and self-indulgence. In most cases degrading forms of sin and gross immorality have repelled us. Life was beautiful and filled with comfort. It was easy-going and enjoyable. We only did the thing we liked because we liked to do it and it did no harm. We lost the sense of reality of life. We were as much afraid of being bored as we were of committing a crime. All this must be changed. Life is real and vital. Severe duties must be done and hard tasks have to be undertaken. Our weak and flabby souls have to develop spiritual muscle and sinew. This development makes our spiritual bodies ache with pain, but they are the pains of a renewed life and strength.

The return of faith takes time, it never comes back in a single day. It is a far cry from the little group at the foot of the Cross watching the death of a loved master and the two disci-

ples at the village of Emmaus asking the Stranger to "abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent," to St. Paul's triumphant "O death, where is thy sting: O grave, where is thy victory!" They had experienced much in the intervening years. They had learned what it was to labour and to suffer and to see their loved ones die through persecution. The new faith had grown stronger with every trial. It possessed the mind and heart and soul. No blow could shake it and no disappointment could wreck it. The same thing was true with Alfred Tennyson. It takes us only a short time to read his great poem, but it took him years to work his way through its varying experiences to its triumphant spiritual conclusion.

And we today cannot ask our faith, which has been enormously overemphasising Christ's kingdom on earth, to transform itself in a moment to a virile and vital faith in Christ's kingdom in heaven. We have overemphasised one truth and we must not forget that Christ's kingdom on earth is true and it must still be sought and worked for, but we must reëmpHASise Christ's kingdom in heaven. That kingdom has seemed very far distant to us in the past, but in recent months it has come very near and very dear to us. Life beyond the grave has

become a vital question. We believe in His Kingdom in heaven, and because of this faith we labour on through disappointment and discouragement for His Kingdom on earth.

This new faith has a new sense of value. As the disciples lost faith in an earthly king and kingdom and found faith in this heavenly kingdom, so must we rearrange our sense of values and send forth a clearer sounding note of spiritual truth. The most valuable thing in life is not economic ease but ethical honesty and spiritual purity. Christ did not promise His disciples an easy road or pleasant surroundings. He promised them toil, persecution, and death itself, and in the world to come life everlasting. He Himself was poor with a poverty that gave Him no home, but He was rich in His purity of life and integrity of soul.

At this time we need to recall this spiritual note in His life and work. Unconsciously and unintentionally we have been materialising our conception of Christ's Kingdom. We have let the materialism of our own lives control our thoughts of Christ and His purpose. We need to let Christ spiritualise the materialism in which we must live and labour. God has been doing this for us through the things we suffered. Our sufferings open the door to Him whom the prophet of old called a Suffering Servant. In

His companionship we learn to know the blessing of that peace that the world does not give and cannot take away. This peace of God strengthens our hearts, and we are enabled to rise above doubt and uncertainty and labour on both for Christ's Kingdom on earth and also for His Kingdom in heaven.

This is the Faith that will return. It is a spiritual experience transforming our materialistic conception of values. It does not modify our interest in every effort to help the weak or to improve social conditions. It merely puts them where they belong as activities of faith and protects us from the danger of making them the inspirers of faith.

This renewed faith will affect the system of thought that maintains it; it requires a renewed emphasis on the power that keeps it alive and the goal of life it seeks to attain. It finally requires the inspiration of the living Christ.

These are the things we will consider in the chapters that follow.

VII

SPIRITUAL ORTHODOXY

OUR investigations in the preceding chapters have shown that the Church has failed to hold its young men; the denominational appeal lacks strength; the men need and want a practical Christianity; and the spiritual longing of men needs to be given voice and made real. We have dealt with spiritual aspirations and practical forms of church work. We must now consider the intellectual concepts that are needed to meet these problems. In the last analysis church activities are always determined by ideas and ideals.

The foundation of all its work is found in the Church's definition of Orthodoxy. The orthodox things are the things that are considered to be in accordance with the teaching and purpose of Christ. Heterodox opinions are those that are thought to be in opposition to Christ. Therefore the conception of orthodoxy determines what things should be worked for and the methods that should be used.

Orthodoxy is a crystallisation of spiritual

ideals and the determining factor of religious activities. It is the organisation of spiritual life and thought in accordance with some set of controlling principles that establish their laws and bring them into orderly relations to one another.

There is, of course, a right kind of orthodoxy—and there is also the wrong kind. To many persons orthodoxy has so long represented in their thoughts the stronghold and safeguard of faith that it is hard for them to realise it can mean anything else. Yet there is a form of orthodoxy which is a spiritual strait-jacket for the hampering of religious activities and the hindering of spiritual growth. The classical example of this form of orthodoxy is found in the Pharisees at the time of Christ. In the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John we have one of the best illustrations of its destructive power. Not only does it keep the Pharisees from recognising the Christ but in the closing verses of that chapter we see them rise up and condemn one of their own members who merely asks that Christ be given a fair trial.

These Pharisees were not immoral men. They were mostly honest and sincere men who lived according to the standards of their religion. They were bound by established customs and did not have the spiritual vision necessary

for a modification of their religious convictions on the lines laid down by the new revelation of God given through Christ. They tithed their income to the last anise and cumin seed because the law required it; they omitted the weightier matters of mercy and faith because they did not realise that these things were also religious. They were careful about the hours of prayer and sacrifice because these acts were their duty to God, but they devoured widows' houses because "business is business." They had no idea that a man's relation to his fellow-men determined his relationship to God. Religion was religion, and business was business. Religion had to be kept holy. It was not permitted to touch ordinary things. Its commandments revelled in the washing of pots and pans and ceremonial ablutions. It protected the religious man from any possible contamination by its rules for individual conduct.

Christ overthrew this whole conception of religion by his personal example. He took His religion into the market-place and street. He practised it by mingling with publicans and sinners. He broke down the wall of partition between the secular and religious and the Pharisees feared that true religion would be lost. Christ's conduct appeared to the Pharisees to be not only the casting of pearls before swine

but, even worse than that, the denial of religion itself. They failed to realise that Christ's aim was to spiritualise life and all its relationships. They had tried to attain holiness by the way of separation. He purposed to bring holiness to the world by the method of spiritual transformation. Their conception of holiness was applied to their own personal lives and left the world just as bad as it had been before. Christ's purpose was to save the world from its sin by the power of a holy and loving God.

This wrong conception of orthodoxy is not limited to the Pharisees at the time of Christ. It is a type of mind rather than a school of thought that exists in every age. It is an exaltation of rules and definitions because of their clearness and the ease with which they can be grasped and a depreciation of a spirit because it is hard to define and has to be practised to be understood.

Many sincere people today believe that orthodoxy means nothing more than an intellectual belief in the system of theology taught by their own faith and an attendance at the services of their own church. They are regularly at the hours of worship, active in church work, and generous with their gifts. They possess the virtues and also the limitations of the old-time Pharisee. They have never conceived of Chris-

tianity as a spirit controlling the whole of life and all its relationships. Such a thought is new and, therefore, dangerous and to be avoided.

The Orthodoxy of Stagnation

This kind of orthodoxy has three outstanding characteristics. It is the orthodoxy of stagnation. It conceives of the faith as something once delivered to the saints, and believes that its only duty is to protect and keep that faith. It is like a man who takes a barrel of spring water and determines to keep it for its purity. The water is pure and living when he first places it in the barrel. But separated from the sparkling and bubbling spring it becomes stagnant, loses its purity, and turns odorous and miasmatic. The water that Christ constantly refers to is the living water—the water that is ever bubbling up and always flowing forth.

The story is told of a farmer's daughter who went away from home to boarding-school. At Christmas time she returned home for the vacation. She complained to her mother that the parlour was close and musty. After the daughter returned to school the mother carefully cleaned the parlour, dusted the furniture, washed the curtains, and scrubbed the wood-

work. When the room fairly shone in its cleanliness, the loving mother carefully closed and bolted the windows and locked the doors. In the spring when the daughter returned home she again complained how musty the parlour was. The mother exclaimed, "You foolish child, it can't be close and musty, for right after you returned to school the room was carefully scrubbed and cleaned, and it has been closed ever since." The mother didn't realise that it wasn't sufficient to clean the room and shut it up. It needed the pure air and bright sunlight to keep it fresh and sweet. So it is with some men's faith. It was once a vital part of their lives. They learned their catechism and they memorised their Bible texts. They had their faith, and they thought that they needed only to keep it. They placed it in their lives and closed the windows and doors and expected that faith to keep vital and living. Instead, it became musty and stale.

The Christian faith is life, and as a life it must live each day. Christ came to fulfil the law, but he also vitalised and spiritualised it. You cannot fit a boy who is both strong and lusty at eight years of age with a suit of clothes and sew them on him, and have those clothes still fit when the boy reaches maturity. The boy is a growing life, and he must constantly

be clothing himself in new apparel. Christ Himself told us that you cannot take the old, dried, cracked leather wine-skins and fill them with new wine, seething with life and bubbling with power. The wine is bound to ferment and the dried old skins cannot yield. They have no elasticity because they are old and dead. The result can only be a catastrophe that will ruin the skins and waste the wine. And still many a young life, bursting with vitality and filled with spiritual power, is being forced into the worn-out skins our fathers used, and the skins are breaking and the lives are being wasted.

The condition of the men of our country gives point to this illustration. They have been developed physically and mentally by their army experience. Their spiritual life cannot be contained in the old wine-skins. They look for and demand a faith that deals with live issues and not with mummies a thousand years old. If Christianity insists on confining itself to its old shibboleths and shuns the questions of practical life the men will leave it alone. Christ burst the shackles of Phariseeism and the world today needs to have its old conceptions enlarged and vitalised by the spirit of God.

The Orthodoxy of a Half Faith

The second characteristic of this form of orthodoxy is its half faith. It has faith enough to trust God, but it has not faith enough to trust God completely. It fears the scholar's research, and it fears the growth of knowledge. I can have no sympathy with any such fears. My faith is not a burden that I must carry, but it is the power that carries me. It must be elastic enough to meet the truth in literature, in art, in science, and in language fearlessly, and still be strong enough to control my whole life. If science or research can prove it false, the sooner I know it the better it is for me and for all the lives I touch. I do not want to believe or teach something that is not wholly true, so I must test my faith by the fierce fires of truth to purify it and make it strong.

This half faith passed muster in the years that have gone by because the world was living on a low spiritual level. The experiences of the last four years have changed the atmosphere of life. Many men have had to deal with the reality of their ideals for the first time in their lives. Loyalty means more than merely standing while the Star-Spangled Banner is played or the taking off your hat while the flag passes.

It means sacrifice and service. Thousands of men have given their lives and other thousands have sacrificed their business at the call of duty. A single incident that happened in one of the cantonments during the first year of the war illustrates this point.

A group of soldiers was gathered around the stove of a Y.M.C.A. Hut on a bitter winter's afternoon.

"Tony, what made you cry so much when you first came to camp?" one of them asked a foreign-looking fellow who had just joined the group.

Tony answered with a grunt.

"Oh, Tony, tell us what was the matter with you when the draft caught you," said another of the group.

They kept this up until finally Tony told his story.

"I wuk hard an' save money," he began in broken English. "Bye and bye I buy fine fruit store. My t'ree brudders help me. We save money an' buy annuder fruit store. Two brudders run one store. Odder brudder help me an' me run odder store. We do fine business an' make money. De war come long, two brudders enlist. Tony shut up one store. Draft come long and take Tony. When Feb-uer' come draft take odder brudder. Tony

bust. Tony cry when he come to Army 'cause he lose stores, lose money, lose everyding."

He paused a minute while the crowd was silent.

"Well, I should worra!" he continued; "Uncle Sam feed Tony."

He did not complain. He did not denounce the Government. His heart had been sore and his warm southern nature had shown his grief in tears. Thousands of others have suffered the same loss and never said a word. Tony's story would not have been known if it had not been for the "joshing" he received about his tears. Such experiences make men instinctively recognize genuineness. Loyalty to their country has meant courage and self-sacrifice. Loyalty to God must mean a courageous faith or they will have none of it. Their army experience has made them keen judges of character; if their religious leaders lack open-mindedness and continue to advocate a half faith these men will renounce their leadership and repudiate Christianity.

The experiences of the war have reached a wider circle of people than those contained in the different branches of the service in another way. The accumulated suffering and sorrow of a war-wracked world has made many people long for a more definite understanding of

eternity. So many young men have died and so many others have had physical manhood wrecked by wounds, that a great host of people are thinking about the limitations of this material existence, and they long for an assurance of immortality. To meet this need the Church must obtain the confidence of these people. A fear of science creates doubts that no words can allay. The Church must win the respect of people's intellect by its fearless love of truth to give them confidence in its promises of the future.

This orthodoxy of a half faith has always been strong enough to trust God for spiritual things. It believes that He can save the soul, and no one can prove the contrary because this is a mystical conception that can be proved only in a future life. It is very severe and all powerful in dealing with the ethics of the individual. It insists on honesty, chastity, and sobriety for all men. It is positive in a negative way. It is strong in its "Thou shalt not" and weak in its constructive elements. It defines the Christian life in terms of the things that must not be done. It prohibits the use of tobacco, card-playing, theatre-going, and dancing. It forgets that most of these things are not wrong in themselves but only wrong when improperly used. Many of the chaplains who

studied the soldiers in the trenches complain of the wrong conception of Christianity that has been created by this negative emphasis.

Much as it is to be regretted, honesty requires us to admit that right here the positive character of this static orthodoxy ceases. We need a theology of positive statements.

A recent study of the men in the Y.M.C.A. Huts showed that they considered that the three cardinal sins are, first, cowardice, then selfishness, and finally conceit. What has the Church to say to this spirit? The opposites of cowardice, selfishness, and conceit are courage, unselfishness, and humility. These are three fundamental virtues of the Christianity of Christ. A positive statement of these virtues must be made to command the respect and allegiance of the manhood of the world.

This need of a positive theology is seen in another connection. When the static theology deals with the complicated problems of social evils due to our methods of production and distribution they are called politics, and Christ's Kingdom which He came to proclaim and which He gave His life for, loses its power and becomes a mere dream. It has not the faith to accept Christ's message in its entirety and bring the new Jerusalem to this earth.

If the Church believes that Christ meant any-

thing by teaching them to pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth," she ought to strive to see that this is done. The question of wages and working conditions are moral questions. They deal with a man's life and his ability to provide for his family. The labour question is a difficult and delicate one. The old type of orthodoxy dodged the issue by saying it was not a religious question. It permitted the Pharisee to grind the face of the poor and then right himself with God by paying his tithe into the Temple treasury. The hypocrisy of any such conduct will be quickly discovered by men who have had their conscience awakened through their recent experiences, and any Church that fears to apply the doctrines of righteousness and justice to its members will be unable to hold these men.

Chaplains and Y.M.C.A. workers found that their religious backgrounds meant little or nothing to the men in the ranks. They looked for personality. When they found a spiritual personality they respected, they responded to it. This type of personality bore the stamp of genuineness. You cannot be genuine if you are afraid that your faith cannot stand the test of truth.

The Orthodoxy of Dogmatism

The third characteristic of this wrong form of orthodoxy is its dogmatism. The Pharisees had no doubts, they had no qualms, they had no uncertainties in dealing with Christ. They had the law of Moses; Christ's teaching differed from their conception of this law, therefore He was wrong. It was just as simple as ABC. They had the rule, and the rule began and ended the matter.

This type of theology is always sophomoric in its conception of life. It is arbitrary in its statements, it is absolute in its convictions, and it forgets that "They see not clearest who see all things clear." Real knowledge, in all its forms, realises its own limitations and never fails to appreciate that truth is larger than the mind of any man. It is indistinct and undefinable in many vital spots, because it is the truth and as yet we can only see through a glass darkly. These three elements—stagnation, half faith, and dogmatism—caused the Pharisees to reject Christ and crucify Him. These three elements, whenever they reappear, limit and hurt the Church and block the way of Christ's Kingdom. It is the orthodoxy of

the letter. There is a true orthodoxy, but it is the orthodoxy of the spirit.

The Orthodoxy of the Spirit

This orthodoxy of the spirit has its roots reaching far down into the past. They reach into the lives of John Knox and John Calvin; they are nourished by the teaching of St. Augustine and the spirit of Thomas à Kempis; they reach deep into the life of Jesus Christ, drawing strength from His life and teachings, from His sacrificial death and resurrection. They do not stop even here. They touch the lives of the great prophets, Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, with their gospel of social righteousness. They draw strength from Hosea and his gospel of redeeming love. They go into the personal experiences of the Psalmist who sang, "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills," and "The Lord is my Shepherd." They go still deeper into the very beginnings of Israel's history and draw strength from that man of faith, Abraham, who went out from his home not knowing whither he went, but trusting in God. This is all true, and eternally true, but these are only the roots. The Tree of Faith has her roots in the past, but her flowers and fruit are in the future. Christ was more interested, as

every good husbandman is, in the flowers and fruit than in the roots. The climax and crown of all orthodoxy is not measured by its loyalty to its roots but by its reaching forth into the future and attaining the flowers and fruit that Christ seeks. It is true that every tree that is cut off from its roots dies; but it is equally true that every tree that fails to attain its flowers and fruit never lives. You must have loyalty to the past and also a growing life that is reaching out into the future.

The orthodoxy of the spirit is not dogmatic in its statement. It recognises that the creeds of Christendom summed up the spiritual experiences and the beliefs of their authors. They are the great landmarks of faith. They should be honoured and venerated as the interpreters of Christianity. They are not and cannot be final statements of religious experience. Language is used as the medium in which the religious experiences of the Fathers are expressed. Every student knows that no language remains static. Words change their meaning. Some words are enlarged to mean more than they did a hundred years ago, and others are contracted to mean a specific thing instead of continuing to mean a whole class of experiences.

Life and thought do not remain the same.

The knowledge of science has increased a hundredfold in the past century. The laws of nature are no longer hidden from our eyes. We know more about the marvellous organisation and interrelationship of all material things than our fathers did. These things are bound to affect spiritual conceptions. We must honestly recognise this change and define orthodoxy in the light of these changes.

The orthodoxy of the spirit is broad in its sympathy. It recognises that God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. It does not expect or try to make all men accept the same definitions or express themselves in the language of a former age. It demands that they are true to God as He is revealed in Christ. It expects them to show an absolute loyalty to the spirit and teachings of Christ. It recognises that men are temperamentally different, but it demands of all the spiritual loyalty to God that reveals itself in right relations with all men and a due regard to the spiritual things Christ revealed. This is more than a cold morality. It is morality made vital and spiritual by the touch of God.

Professor Giddings in his works on sociology finds the foundation of human society in that mental quality which he calls the "conscious-

ness of kind." If we can develop a "consciousness of kind" which finds itself in the spiritual experience, the accomplishments and inspiration of Christ, we shall cease to rest on an unalterable fixity of mind as the essential orthodoxy. The Church that becomes stereotyped dies. You have only to look at the orthodox Greek Church and the absolute orthodoxy of Spain to see the fruit of the wrong kind of orthodoxy. We need the stimulus of different opinions. We have friends who are almost reactionary in their theology and other friends who are radical in their beliefs. They are both wrong. Our own convictions are the truth to us. These differences should not and in this case do not mar or limit the ties of friendship, or prevent the closest kind of coöperation in all sorts of spiritual work. The play of mind on mind and faith on faith teaches every sincere seeker of the truth that his own mind and faith and intellect itself cannot contain the whole truth.

This is the kind of orthodoxy that the world needs today. This is the kind of foundation that will keep the Church true to Christ and still open her doors to the men of the New Era. This is the spirit that welcomes all progress because it is reaching towards the future. This is the faith that grows with every new experi-

ence and interprets them as new manifestations of God. It is not easily catalogued or defined. You cannot always label its component parts. It may lack definition of details. This may all be true, and yet this is the true orthodoxy. True orthodoxy is a spirit and not a set of definitions.

It is the spirit of Christ and is as broad as the love of God. It is the creator of personality and true piety. It is zealous for all things that help men. It is active in all walks of life. It is founded on a realisation of man's limitations and a recognition of Christ's sufficiency. This is the only spirit that can help the Church of today. Our problems are all practical problems and our need is immediate. On this foundation the Church can be true to herself, faithful to her Master and the spiritual power of the future age.

VIII

THE POWER OF PRAYER

AS we enter the New Era amid the wastage of war and the babel of tongues proclaiming panaceas for every human ill, it is good for our souls to pause a moment and take account of stock. What does the Church possess that gives us confidence in her ability to guide and direct the thought of men at this time?

The answer is not found in her material possessions, although they be great. The scholarship of her ministers, which is above question, does not give us any feeling of assurance.

The culture and sincerity of her membership does not answer our need.

The strength of the Church is her spiritual power. The world needs God, and the Church must bring the power of God into the daily problems of life.

Prayer is our Power with God. Prayer is the supreme need of the world today.

If people only realised what this means they would storm the citadel of heaven with their petitions.

Christ tried to teach His disciples over two thousand years ago the power they possessed in prayer, but they were slow of comprehension and dull of hearing. They failed to realise the significance of His repeated exhortations. His lessons were clear and His meaning plain, but many of His followers have failed to understand His words.

In all His teaching and habit of life His one primary object was to teach men to pray.

He founded His Church in prayer. We see Him time and time again seeking some quiet spot where He might have unbroken communion with God. It is either the mountain top in the early morning hours before the sun arises or it is the Garden of Gethsemane in the middle of the night, but always and ever we catch glimpses of the Master building His Church at the throne of God. He never let His time become so filled with teaching and preaching, healing and comforting, that God was crowded out. He gave His Church a prayer instead of a Creed. If the early Church had only caught the significance of this act she would have saved the world a lot of sorrow and trouble. If the Church had great saints instead of great apologists she would have reached the world much faster than she did. If the Church had men mighty with God in prayer instead of

mighty in argument with men, she would have established Christ's Kingdom on earth before this.

The trouble is not with God, the trouble is with men. Prayer is too mystical to appeal to either the practical or the intellectual man. The practical man wants to do something. The intellectual man wants to analyse and explain something. God wants all men to pray and pray without ceasing.

Christ observed this in one of His most striking parables where He told how the importunate prayers of a poor widow won justice from an unjust judge. He closes this parable with the question, "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him though He bear long with them?" No theological treatise or philosophical essay could show the power of prayer as clearly as this little story with its striking conclusion. The last sentence sends the message home to every heart. It is the Master's call to persistent prayer.

The Apostle Paul caught the purpose and spirit of Christ. Exhortations to prayer fill his Epistles. He is constantly trying to teach the new converts to the faith their need of relying on God for help. He is constantly slipping into prayer as he writes his letters. He slips into prayer because he cannot help it. It is the

habit of his mind. It is the way he faces every difficulty and settles every problem. He could no more help praying in prison than he could help breathing. The one was just as natural for his spiritual nature as the other was for his physical nature. His words to the Church at Thessalonica were his words to the whole Church—"Pray without ceasing." This exhortation was borne of his own practice and the fruit of his own experience.

All that has been said about Christ and the Apostle Paul will be readily admitted.

The question immediately arises, "How can prayer help the world today?"

Prayer is a mystery, but experience proves it is the one thing that helps a lot. The best physicians often use remedies that they cannot explain or even understand. Experience has proven these remedies to be beneficial in certain cases. The physician desires to heal his patient. He therefore uses the remedy he does not understand because he has seen its previous results. He usually attains the result he expects and is satisfied even in his limited knowledge to go on using such a remedy because it is the best thing he knows about.

Is it any less reasonable for Christians to use prayer simply because it works in a mysterious way?

While we realise that we cannot analyse the power of prayer or tabulate its answers, because such efforts are apt to degenerate into absurdities or to border on sacrilege, there are some things we can understand about it, and these things are worthy of our consideration because they help us to cultivate the habit of prayer, and that is what God wants us to do.

Prayer helps the one that prays. It is not easy to pray. We have to learn how. It is like learning to talk in a strange language. At first it is hard to make ourselves understood. Proficiency only comes by practice. When we have learned to pray we find that prayer brings us in touch with the mind of God. To the man that has never learned to pray this may sound like Yiddish. To the soul who has rested on God in hours of conflict or sorrow it is a plain statement of fact. Sorrows surge around and pain increases, but the soul in touch with God has peace. This is one reason why we should pray now. We need to feel the mind and heart of God to keep brave and sane.

Prayer helps the community that contains people that pray. Students tell us that there is such a thing as the social mind. This is the mental atmosphere that pervades a community. It springs from the action of different minds working together and influencing one another.

The community that is filled with praying people is sure to be better balanced mentally than a community that is swept by every wind of passion or sentiment. Prayer acts in such a community as ballast in a ship. It steadies it in time of storm and resists the shock of the waves.

This is merely saying that prayer is the great builder of national morale, and morale is an essential element in keeping a nation sane in time of social upheavals like the present. The nation that prays will continue strong, while the nation that neglects prayer will lose its balance and drift into excesses that will ruin it.

Prayer helps the ones prayed for.

There are two ways in which prayer works. It works directly, and its winged petition carries a blessing just as surely as the wireless telegraph carries a message. This is a mystery, and the analysis of a divine mystery is apt to be an absurdity. It is enough for us to know that our petition to God sends a blessing to the one we love in a distant country or on the sea just as surely as the Marconi telegraph will send them a message. The average man who sends a wireless understands no more about the method of sending his message than the Christian does about the mechanics of praying.

It works—that is the main thing that interests them.

Prayer helps the one prayed for indirectly. No one knows just how it works, but we all know that a praying mother is a better safeguard against sin than all the lectures on social hygiene that were ever given. We believe with all our hearts in this educational work. We only believe a little more in a mother's prayer.

Prayer not only helps the individuals we pray for, it helps the cause.

If the whole Church of God is united in prayer for a righteous and just solution of our social problems, their prayers create a spirit that prepares the way for its attainment. The morale of the nation is stimulated and the tendency to compromise with entrenched evils is curbed. The idealism and self-sacrifice that have been developed in time of war must be conserved to solve the problems of peace. Prayer is the conserving force that keeps this spirit alive.

Prayer helps God.

The profoundest truth of all is that our prayers help God. The mystery of it is beyond our knowledge. The righteous, just, and holy God needs our prayers to complete His work on earth. There is no other explanation for the often repeated exhortations to pray.

God needs our prayers. By this means we create the human implements through which God works. God might create a peculiar being to do His work on earth, but He does it. He takes men who have learned to pray and uses them. He may sometimes call a man who has the potentialities of prayer to be His servant even as He called Saul of Tarsus. They are in every case perfected by prayer. This is the way they learn God's will. This is the way they gain God's strength. They are the prophets, saints, and seers of God, and the secret of their power is found in their prayers. They are God's instruments on earth.

Our prayers can keep the power of God active in these trying days of reconstruction. The solution that comes from God is the only solution that can solve the world's problem.

No nation is a law unto itself. There are principles of righteousness written in God's character. The nation that breaks the law of God has sinned. Desires of national ambition and military necessities cannot revoke God's laws of integrity, justice, and honour. These laws are written in God's character. The nation that outrages them is rebelling against God. We must strive to write the laws of God into our national and international life. Prayer helps God to help us in this effort.

Woe be it unto us and our children if the present critical unrest degenerate into a mere struggle of greed between the different classes of society. Temptations are bound to assail the Church at this time. We can only conquer them by keeping close to God. Prayer keeps us close to God. God is on the side of righteousness, and that is where we want to be.

The Danger of Half Prayers

There is one danger in praying that Christians have to constantly guard against. This is the danger of trying to limit God with our own ignorance. It is the tendency to let our own judgments determine the limits within which we expect God to work. We will call this weakness the danger of praying half prayers.

We have a most interesting illustration of this weakness in Acts 1:24. The disciples are interested in finding a successor to take the place of Judas Iscariot among the apostles. They are deeply in earnest and absolutely conscientious. They want God's will done. But listen to their prayer, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen." They wanted God to choose for them an apostle, but they limited God to the names of two men who

commended themselves to their own good judgment. They prayed to God and asked him to decide between Joseph and Matthias. They prayed the prayer of "either—or." It was a half prayer of godly men, but it was only a half prayer because it was a limited prayer. What they wanted was God's apostle. They made their mistake by limiting God by their qualifying clause, "of these two."

There is no doubt that both Joseph and Matthias were godly men, but from their future relationship to the apostles they were what we should call colourless men. They seem to have lacked initiative, aggressiveness, and leadership. The apostles wanted a leader, they wanted a man thoroughly educated, of keen mind and aggressive spirit.

It is possible if we could have been present at that time and asked the apostles if they knew such a man that they would have answered, "Yes, there is such a man but unfortunately he is an impossibility. Saul of Tarsus, trained at the feet of Gamaliel, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a leader of the orthodox, and a man aggressive in spirit is just the kind of man we need. But unfortunately he is an impossibility, as he is an enemy of Christ and the worst opponent of the Church." On further questioning they might have admitted that both Joseph and Matthias

lacked many of the elements that they felt essential for the apostleship, and still they were willing to let their ignorance limit their judgment and they had only faith enough to ask God to choose "of these two."

God answered their prayer of "either—or" by saying "neither—nor—but." God's choice wasn't Joseph nor Matthias but Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul. He was chosen not of man but of God.

The scoffer and the critic might have sneered at the prayer of the disciples in Jerusalem and said, "See their prayer is not answered." The child of God realises that the spirit of their prayer and the desire of their souls was truly answered by a loving Father. He reached over and beyond the limitations of their "either—or" and answered in living but unmistakable terms "neither Joseph nor Matthias, but Saul."

Many of our prayers are limited by our ignorance, we pray the prayer of "either—or." Our real wish is for God's purpose to be worked out in our lives and in the world about us, and when God answers "neither this, nor that, but this better thing," we see the answer to our prayer.

The world fails to realise that prayer is a spiritual exercise which receives a spiritual answer. When Christ said unto His disciples,

“Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you,” He was speaking of the spiritual life. He that asks for the Spirit of Christ receives it. Every one that seeks his heavenly Father shall find Him. No knock is so faint but it opens the door of His presence. Even the half prayer receives a full answer. The irreligious man and the scientist may fail to see it and be unable to tabulate its results because the half prayer has limited God by its “either—or” and God answers “neither—nor—but.” That “but” is something better than the mind of man has conceived of as a possibility. The heart of faith recognises the hand of a loving Father and knows His answer. Every true prayer even if it is only a half prayer is the expression of a spiritual aspiration and receives a spiritual answer.

The only answer to the problems of the New Era is a spiritual one as all its problems are fundamentally spiritual.

The world of the New Era needs the spirit of prayer; the spirit that believes in God and seeks above all things to have His will done on earth. This is the solution that Christianity offers to all our problems. This is God’s way, and there is no better one.

IX

PRACTICAL IMMORTALITY

THE Church has failed in recent years to emphasise as she should the Christian's confidence in a future life. The world today longs for this assurance. This is shown in the number of books that are being published on spiritualism. Some of them are written by men that command attention, such as Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. Conan Doyle. They are written from hearts that have been bruised by sorrow, and they show the spiritual interests of their authors. If it were not for the authors' standing and spirit some of their statements would be ludicrous. Take, for example, the celestial cigar enjoyed by Raymond's friend in the spirit world which was made of ether and such things. Can any man addicted to the habit of smoking find any comfort in such a cigar? A cigar to be a real comfort must be of the Havana variety. Only boys in their teens find enjoyment in water lily stems, cornsilk, and such substitutes. Hungry souls are reading these books in search of help.

What has the Gospel of Christ to say in answer to this longing?

It has a message that rings out like a clarion trumpet.

Heirs of Immortality!

How that thought should grip our souls.

Too long has the Church rested in the shadow of a distant hope. It should be working in the light of eternal day.

We have used the doctrine of immortality as old ladies use lavender. It is something that gives a refined scent to their linen and old lace. Its perfume reminds us of the sacred guest chamber.

This is an absolutely wrong idea of immortality. It should be the ozone of life. Instead of making us think of refinement and old age it should make our blood tingle and give us a feeling of spiritual exhilaration like the exhilaration that comes from standing on the bow of a ship as she cuts her way through the waves and the salt breeze stirs the blood and makes the heart rejoice in physical life.

Christ's Message

Christ taught His disciples that immortality was the real key to the mystery of living. He put this truth in the dynamic words "He that

findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it." This epigram compels attention by its wording. At first sight it appears to be a contradiction of terms, but it contains a message that experience proves to be the truth.

The man who tries to fill his life with living shortly has to face the ennui of life. Pleasures lose their attraction. Indulgence brings surfeit. Christ told His disciples that only by losing their life, by losing the desire to satisfy life with living, could they find real abundant life. A thousand thousand witnesses arise to prove the truth of His words. Ennui never threatens the man who is living in the light of immortality. He finds the fulness of life in losing his life in service for others. He is satisfied in spending himself and being spent because he knows that this life is not all. It is only the beginning of life. It is the preparation for the spiritual life which is eternal.

Paul's Use of Immortality

Paul realised the supreme importance and the practical nature of immortality when he said to the church at Corinth, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching in vain and your faith is also vain." I can imagine the sensation that

would have been caused in some of our cultured and refined churches if a pastor had made such a blunt statement five years ago. The congregation would have felt as if a bucket of ice water had been thrown in their faces. Immortality was a mystery. Something one might hope for, but incapable of scientific proof. It was something most people vaguely believed in, but they felt that it should be preached with reservations. Men should be left to think for themselves on such a difficult question. The gospel of an improved social order was the only message for the pulpit. The gospel of an improved social order only touches one-half of human nature. It deals with practical problems and makes religion real. Men also have souls and spiritual longings. Their hopes and aspirations reach beyond the problems of this life. Paul realised this need. Either Christ was risen or Christianity was a delusion.

He was talking with people who had to face the brutal persecutions of the Roman power. If they were to give their wives up to jail and their children to the beasts and their bodies to be burned they had to know the foundation of their hopes. Christ had risen. They also should rise. The Gospel was not only good news of human emancipation and an improved social order, it was the message of immortality. Life was one.

It was spiritual, and they that live in the spirit should not only live here in persecution and rejection, but they should live eternally with God in power and righteousness.

The Fear of Mysticism

We have been too much afraid of being called mystics. Life is full of mystery, and the mystery of immortality does not detract from its truth; it only gives a new and larger meaning to life as a whole. It does not take away the reality of this life but rather completes it. If this life were all, we would have to face an insoluble enigma. Righteousness does not always prevail. Justice is not always attained. The Book of Life does not balance. We are left with our accounts in confusion and our ideals floating in the air without any foundation. The assurance of immortal life changes this situation. Righteousness does prevail and justice is attained. The Book of Life does balance and all its accounts are put in order. The ideals of our noblest minds are based on the eternal principles of truth and reach their full fruition in the life of the spirit, where there is no sin nor suffering to destroy the harmony of life.

The soul that has this assurance bravely lives in this life now and it bravely dies for right-

eousness, knowing that it lives again with God in the real life of the spirit. It leaves the mystery of death in the hands of the Eternal Father and glories in the prospects of wonderful experiences in a new existence where pain and tears do not exist.

The Influence of the War

The Great War has brought home to us as never before man's need of this faith.

If a man's life is his only possession and this life is all, how can we ask any man to be blown to atoms to make our life easy or even to make the world safe for democracy? If this life is all we had better compromise with our principles and sacrifice our honour and make ourselves as comfortable as possible. We deteriorate to the level of the dumb beasts of the field. We eat and drink, we sleep and wake again. We are and are not. It is a hopeless level of material monotony. This is not the life that stirs our souls. If this life is only the beginning of life and if it continues throughout eternity we not only see the basis for asking many men to make the supreme sacrifice, we also get the foundation for every noble aspiration and effort. Without this foundation self-sacrifice is absurd and noble efforts are a delusion.

The New Idea of Death

The trouble has been in the way we have thought about death. Death has been looked upon as the culminating misfortune of old age. The grave has been considered the junk-heap of worn-out human machines. This conception makes death sordid and ignoble. In truth it is the Beautiful Adventure. It is the step from the full-grown materialistic world to the beautiful but shadowy spiritual existence.

The swinging portals have opened so occasionally in the average human life and it has been accompanied with such bitter heart aches that our eyes have failed to see the light. The doors have been opening more often in the days of war and sorrow we have recently passed through. Young lives and strong men have been entering into the world beyond in a constantly growing stream. It is no longer the resting place of worn-out human machines. It is the home of our best and bravest.

This fact gives death and the grave a new aspect. Are all the hopes, ambitions, and enthusiasms of these brave men ended too? We cannot believe it. We must rather agree with Matthew Arnold when he revisited Rugby and

thought of his father's strong personality and said,

“O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain
Somewhere, surely, afar
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!”

So we believe that the strength of our modern crusaders is not buried in Flanders' fields or in the plains of Picardy but is still living and at work in God's own Kingdom.

Immortality the Creator of Heroes

The assurance of immortality is not only the comfort for those that mourn, it is also the creator of heroes. The man who knows that his soul does not die but that it is sure to live in a better life is the man who gives himself for spiritual principles and noble ideals. These things are the real issues of life, and personality and character grow from contact with and loyalty to them.

Thomas Huxley was a great and true man, but he was an absolute materialist. In his letter to Charles Kingsley on the death of his little son he bitterly complains of Saul's words, “What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?

let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." Huxley was thinking of a parent's natural grief at the loss of his child. Paul was speaking of the philosophy of life that should be willing to face persecution and death for a spiritual principle. If that principle was false what need is there of suffering for it?

Many people who consider immortality as an impracticable and unnecessary question make the same mistake. The man who fails to live in the light of immortality may be a good citizen and kindly neighbour, but he is apt to be a thoroughgoing materialist even as Huxley was. And the materialist always misunderstands the message of immortality from lack of spiritual appreciation. Immortality is the one thing that makes every moment of life tingle with potentialities. We are all living in the very doorway of spiritual life. In a moment we may cross the threshold. No man can realise this without having immortal life constantly bubbling in his veins.

This is the real fountain of perpetual youth. The body may grow old, but the heart and soul continue young. Interests do not wear out, and activities do not cease. They only change. The constant assurance of our continued existence is a joy to the young man facing danger and death, and a solace to the old man who has

spent his strength in a good cause. His waning physical strength is only an opportunity for the growth of spiritual power. Hope and ambition continue to bubble in his veins and perpetual youth is his daily portion.

The men in the trenches had the vision. They do not speak of "dying." They talk of "going west." In this phrase they sum up the hopes and ambitions of five hundred years. "Westward ho!" was the call to adventure. It was the rallying-cry of those who sought a new life in a New World. The bold buccaneers turned their prow toward the setting sun in search of wealth and opportunity. The buccaneers of the spirit take up their cry. The world of their dreams is before them. They are good soldiers of a worthy cause and into the Setting Sun they plough their way. The purple and crimson of the dying day beautifies their pathway.

We all are facing this adventure. The land of our dreams and hopes is before us. We turn away from the sordid world we know and bravely face the unknown.

Today the world needs this message. Its mystery should not dim our eyes. Our hopes should rather encourage us. Dying is a daily event. As we see the brave and true sail away let our hearts be strong and our souls brave. "*Bon voyage, ye Brave!*" is our parting cry.

In time we too shall pack our earthly possessions away and with our souls stripped for action step on the ship that carries us over the unknown sea for that port in the land of the spirit where all brave hearts shall find a home. We tarry here for a few days and then in the New World we will make our home forever.

X

ON TO CHRIST

WE now come to the conclusion of the whole matter. We have been studying some unpleasant things, and we have been contemplating some sublime truths. We now find ourselves in the same position as a small boy who had been working for some time at a problem in mathematics. He has been carrying on his work step by step. He knows where he has come from and the steps by which he has progressed, but suddenly his whole interest becomes centred on one subject. He wants to know, "What is the answer?" We too want to know the answer to the needs of the present time.

I believe this answer is found in Jesus Christ.

Christ is the life of the Church, and her fundamental purpose is to make Christ known to the world. There must be some organisation of Christ's followers to make their work and message effective. Christians do not want to degenerate into a mere mob. Coöperation, division of labour, and the need of developing all re-

sources and meeting all opportunities require organisation. The great trouble has been that we have become so much interested in the organisation that we have often thought of it as a wonderful product of man's creative genius. We have thought of its credal statements and official positions as the essential things. Paul tried to teach the early Christians that the Church was not an organisation but an organism. He told them that Christ was the head—the dominating and controlling power. Each individual member was intimately associated with both the head and with each other in producing an organism that functioned in all its parts. We can see the twinkle in the apostle's eye as he tries to show them how essential it is for the different members of the Church to fulfil different offices and function in different ways. He says, "If the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing where were the smelling?" Any child can realise the absurdity of having one great rolling eye instead of a normal body. Who would want to be all ear? Ears are not beautiful at their best, but they are a most useful article when we want to hear. We all want to hear, but we all want to do a good deal

more. We want to hear and see and smell and eat and walk and talk. A great variety of functions require a great variety of members—so it is with the Church.

It must be organised, but it should be organised as an organism with every member connected by nerves and muscles with the brain—that is, with Christ.

This is the message that Paul gave to the church at Corinth—the church that had already sown the seeds of the denominational spirit by saying, “I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.” Paul answers this narrow sectarian spirit by asking,—“Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptised in the name of Paul?”

Here the apostle points the one way for the wiping out of denominational distinctions. They all confess Christ. The nearer they get to Christ the nearer they get together.

Christ gives us the one unifying principle on which to build a federation of denominational interests which will cease scandalising the world by its ecclesiastical quarrels and theological hair-splittings. It gives us the oneness of appeal which opens the door to the opportunity of the New Era.

Besides having Christ dominate the organi-

sation of the Church so that it is in truth a spiritual organism, and besides being the one unifying power that ought to bring all the Churches that confess His name into some form of close federation for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom on earth, there is one more important thing that Christ does.

He appeals to many people who are irresponsible to any church. The Churches are suffering for their sins and weaknesses of the past. Every church has failed in some cases to say the right word or do the right thing. These mistakes have hurt sensitive or fretful hearts and the grievances have been magnified. The Churches appeal to many people, but Christ appeals to every one. They respond to His winsomeness and strength, His fearlessness and self-sacrifice, His common-sense and spiritual vision. He will draw the men of the New Era, as He has drawn the men of every age, from sin, selfishness, and indifference.

The compelling power of His spirit has lost none of its strength. When it touches human hearts they show the fruits of the spirit in goodness, righteousness, and truth. Evil communications, malice, thefts, and all selfishness are banished when Christ takes possession of the soul. This spiritual power appeals to the best elements of human nature and stirs the

noblest impulses of mankind. Good as it is to stimulate men's interest in noble thinking, purity of life and unselfish service, Christ does more. Christ gives men the power that saves them from their weakness and failures and that redeems them from sin.

One of the divine mysteries often overlooked in modern life is the way in which the power of Christ is redeeming the lost every day. Harold Begbie has tried to tell this story of modern miracles in his books "Twice-Born Men" and "Souls in Action," and he has done it well. This story was first written on the shores of Galilee, by the dusty highways of Samaria, and in the crowded streets of Jerusalem when the carpenter's Son called the fishermen to leave their nets and gave His message to His own day and generation. It was written in letters of blood on the Cross of Calvary. This story has come down through two thousand years of experience. Savonarola in Florence, Huss in Bohemia, Luther in Germany, Calvin in Geneva, Knox in Scotland, and Wesley in England strove to make it clear to their own generation.

Today you can see walking miracles in any gospel mission or Salvation Army barracks. You can find them in the churches. But still many fail to realise this power of God that has

been and is still being revealed through Jesus Christ.

The Churches preach it and theology defines it and tells the laws of its operation, and yet the world has failed to grasp its significance. In these unique and startling manifestations it is a soul's experience and as such is hard to explain. These miracles do exist, and any one who so desires may see them and study them to his heart's content.

Some of the disciples of Christ had no experience on the Mount of Transfiguration or at the bedside of Jairus' daughter, where the dead was brought back to life. So some men in every generation are faithful disciples of Christ, and yet they have no ecstasies or glowing thrills of emotion. Andrew may have been one of these quiet, faithful fellows. He did not see Christ transformed and he did not see Him raise the dead. He was so busy bringing others to his Master that he lost all the emotional thrills of the religious life. He was just as good an apostle as Peter, but he was of a different kind of a temperament.

Many good men are still thinking of the thrills of emotion, when all they need is to realise that their quiet confidence in the goodness and power of Christ have opened the door for them to enter into fellowship with Him. They need strength

to overcome their weakness. They need His guidance to keep the pathway of truth and duty. They need His presence to banish evil thoughts and ennoble their ideals. They need Christ, and it is the Church's privilege to bring Christ to them.

Many efforts have been made to make Christ clear to men. One of the most recent of these efforts is a good illustration of how a good purpose is frustrated by a mistaken psychology.

Back to Christ

A few years ago this country rang with the cry "Back to Christ." This was the spiritual call of a past age. It was used to bring men back to the Man of Galilee as teacher, friend, and Saviour.

Those who used this expression forgot that you cannot turn back the hands of the clock. They move forward irresistibly. This constant movement of time is so quiet that it is often overlooked. Something has to call our attention to it.

This is well illustrated in Professor L. P. Jacks's story "The Magic Formula," in which he shows the influence two boys had on strangers and on themselves by asking the question, "Would you mind telling us the time?" This

question made old men think of their youth and it made the boys themselves interested in time and eternity. The closing incident of the story tells how the narrator, one of the boys, gives to his friend Billy, the hero, an essay on "Translating Time into Eternity." Billy returns the essay with the comment, "Oh, I translated time into eternity without much difficulty. *But it was plugging ahead all the time.*"

It is plugging ahead all the time. There are no pauses at wayside stations and no sidings on which it can get lost. There are no return trips for Time. It plugs ahead resistlessly and remorselessly. The moment and the day come but once, and then they are translated into eternity.

Youth passes away like a pleasant dream in the night. Middle age is only a short day's work. Youth and middle age fade into old age before we realise it. We cannot go back to our childhood, with its innocent belief in Fairies and Golden Islands filled with treasures, even if we would. No effort of our imaginations can make the woodlot once more into a great forest filled with wild beasts and savage men. We cannot clear our minds of the ideas and methods of thinking that have been developed by years of careful discipline. No more can we go back to Christ. The world has changed. Life has

become enlarged. Ideas have developed. Two thousand years have left their mark on the whole creation.

The Roman Empire has crumbled into decay and passed away. Kings and emperors have passed before us as a pageant of yesterday. Democracy now sits enthroned.

Science has outgrown its early childhood and now holds the respect of all men. Her early struggles in the laboratories of the alchemists as they searched for the Philosopher's Stone and the elixir of life have given place to careful research based on long years of recorded experiments.

The wildest dreams of the ancients are now but commonplace affairs of daily life. The aeroplane sweeps through the air under the control of man's hand. The wireless carries our messages across space. The X-ray looks through solid matter.

To men of this age of advancement and progress the cry "Go back!" rings a discordant note. They are going ahead. Back of them are hard-fought fields and lonely vigils. They have fought and struggled for advancement. They have no enthusiasm or interest in any kind of retreat. It is out of harmony with their mental processes.

The rallying-cry of the New Era must be "On to Christ."

We cannot turn back to the Man of Galilee—the Suffering Servant. We must push ahead to the Christ of God—the living triumphant Christ, the Saviour of men from sin and the Saviour of men from selfishness and petty living.

We have the background in His earthly life. We see the humility and friendliness of the Master; and we know His sympathy and power. We join with the poet in his appreciation of Christ when he sings—

"O perfect life in perfect labour writ."

Every one recognises the truth of these words. They have dignified labour and glorified unselfishness. But we cannot stop here. We must go on with the poet to his next line—

"O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest."

This is the larger experience of the two, and often a hard journey and a long time separates these two lines. It is one thing to think well of the "perfect life in perfect labour writ," but it is far more personal and compelling to take the man who lived this life as our "Comrade,

Servant, King, or Priest.” The men of the New Era must push on from theoretical appreciation to personal loyalty and obedience. They have to follow and obey a living Saviour who, conquered sin and death by His own death on the Cross. They do not stop at admiration, but press on to live as Christ would have them live here and now, through the power that He gives them.

This means not only a deeper realisation of Christ’s place in history, but it requires a readjustment in our thoughts as to what He means by spirituality.

“On to Christ” means that the Church must sound forth a deeper definition of spirituality than it has ever given before. In the past it has called men to the spirituality of the closet—the spirituality of communing with God. This is only a half definition of Christ’s spirituality. He did say that the first Commandment was “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength”; but He did not stop there. He continued His definition by saying: “And the second is like, namely, this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other Commandment greater than these.”

In the past we emphasised the first half of this commandment and called communing with

God spirituality. Unconsciously we were advocating a form of selfishness. It was the selfishness of the soul losing touch with men in a desire for self-culture with God. Christ not only taught that spirituality consisted in more than selfish soul culture, He also practised it. He spent the early hours of the morning and the night in prayer, but He spent His days in active service for men.

The spirituality of soul culture has failed in its appeal to men. They did not respond to it. It lacked meaning and reality. The Church advocated this definition until the people turned away in despair. Its unintentional selfishness sounded a discordant note that many shrank from. This failure was the beginning of the other failures that were pointed out in our first chapter. Music and stereopticon lectures, popular discussions and advertisements were introduced to retrieve the mistake of ignoring the heroism of Christ's life of service for others. These substitutes failed to grip souls.

The men of the New Era need the full spirituality of Christ. They need to be called back to the love of God that they may find adequate strength to overcome their own personal sins and also find help and inspiration for serving others. This is what we mean by *On to Christ*. It is a step forward. It is an effort to grasp

the full significance of His definition of spirituality.

There are some at least, disciples it may be of the Religion of the Inarticulate, who have grasped the significance of Christ's teaching on spirituality without fully realising that it comes from Him. That is the only possible explanation of His beautiful parable, which some one has already named the Parable of the Great Surprise. In this parable He pictures the nations of the earth gathered for judgment while the King divides them into the righteous and unrighteous. He says to those on His right: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto thee, Inasmuch as ye

have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

This is not a substitution of social service for faith. It is an unconscious faith manifesting itself in the life of service for others.

This is Christ's way of showing us how the Religion of the Inarticulate is sometimes crystallised. A clearer emphasis of Christ's meaning of spirituality will reach such souls. They will be helped and strengthened and the Church of the Christ will advance His purpose on Earth by this definition.

The New Era needs Christ. He is still the Saviour of men and the hope of the World.

On to Christ!

Let the new day come with all its problems. He can solve them.

On to Christ!

Wars cannot dim His love and peace cannot hide His glory.

On to Christ!

This was the light in the darkness of the Middle Ages. It will still be the light of the New Day.

On to Christ!



[illegible]

Cy
125

9-19

BV
4501
M114
AUTHOR

McAlpin, E.A. 47342

TITLE

On to Christ

DATE
LOANED

BORROWER'S NAME

DATE
RETURNED

5-25-77

[Handwritten signature]

